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A STUDY OF POLYANDRY

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BY

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CHAPTER 3

THE POLYANDRY OF THE TODAS OF THE NILGIRIS

114 It has often been said that the Todas are the best known aboriginal community in the world. Every general treatise on anthropology is supposed to make at least a passing reference to them, and it is certainly true that data concerning them in very widely quoted in ethnological literature the world over. This, to a large extent, is due to the excellent work done among them by that distinguished British anthropologist, the late Dr W. H. R. Rivers. His book, *The Todas* (see Bibliography), is a classic on the subject, and its voluminous contents cover to a remarkable degree all those aspects of their culture which it was possible to investigate with the contemporary ethnographical means at the disposal of the author. Since then, much progress has been made in this field, and, as I was able to note when with the Todas, the store of information which they can offer is still very far from being exhausted. From this point of view, as from many others, they are truly a most remarkable people, worthy of continued anthropological attention.

[127] During my first visit to the Nilgiris, my time was mostly taken up with making the acquaintance of the tribe. I read Rivers on the spot and looked into the polyandry of the people in a general fashion. I also got to know the neighbouring inhabitants, without a knowledge of whom it is difficult to acquite a proper functional picture of Toda culture, so closely is the latter bound up with that of others, especially in ceremonial and economic matters. On my return, ten years later, I delved more deeply into polyandry, and, in order to get a thorough working knowledge of this form of the marriage institution as practised by the Nilgiri tribe, made a specialized study of one single family, in which two successive generations of men had had quite a considerable number of children born in this type of wedlock.

[128] In this chapter, on the polyandry of the Todas of the Nilgiris, I shall deal first with the general study which I made in 1939, and follow on

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with the special study that is the result of my second visit to south India in 1949.

A. GENERAL STUDY: THE TODAS OF THE NILGIRIS

A general study of the culture of the Todas of the Nilgiris has been presented so well by Dr W. H. R. Rivers in his book that it is quite unnecessary to repeat it here. Readers who are interested in getting to know these people thoroughly are referred to the work, which they will find quite absorbing reading.

In the following paragraphs I propose to give only an outline of the principal traits of Tota culture so that what follows should be intelligible. Some of the Toda institutions are so unique, or as we would say anthropologically, aberrant, that it is absolutely essential to have at least some idea of what they are like in order to understand the nature of the whole.

I will, therefore, first give this outline of Toda culture with a brief description of the habitat and social organisation of the tribe, and go on next, in a second paragraph to describe those customs of the Todas which, in my opinion, have a direct bearing on their institution of polyandrous marriage. Being by inclination functionalist in anthropological outlook, I can quite see that their marriage customs are linked to the entirety of their culture, and even, to some extent, to those of their immediate neighbours, with whom their ties are very close. But it would be too long and too complex to attempt to give so vast a picture of the whole intricate and inter-related pattern, and I would ask my readers to content themselves with the choice of those items of culture which I consider relevant in this connection.

A third paragraph, before we go on to the special study of one Toda polyandrous family, which I reserve for Part B of this section, will deal more closely with Toda polyandry, treating in a general description, all those aspects of it which I was able to gather during my first stay in the Nilgiris in 1939.

1. DESCRIPTIVE OUTLINE

The mountainous district of the Nilgiris is part of the State of Madras, in south India. The name, which means "Blue Mountains" in Sanskrit, is derived from the fact that, seen from the plains, the nearly 9,000

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feet high range of peaks that constitutes the culminating point reached from north to south by the Western Ghats, is visible in clear weather through a distinctly blue haze.

From the capital of the district, Ootacamund ("One-Stone House" in Tamil, shortened to *Ooty* by British residents), seat of the Government Administrator called the Collector, asphalted motor roads lead out in all directions over the grass-covered downs, which are interspaced here and there in the shallow parts with *sholas* or woods of short trees and bushes. The scenery is very beautiful, and the climate is excellent. Europeans from Madras city and from elsewhere, ever since the beginning of the 18th century, have made use of the station, the highest in India, from which to escape the insalubrious damp heat of the lowlands.

It is here on this green plateau that the Todas live. In their own language, they call themselves *Olkh*,[1] "men", their other name by which all outsiders know them, Toda, being from the Badaga language, *Toda-ma*, "chief". Their houses, *arsh*, which are of a particular kind, made of slit bamboo and planks and thatched, in the shape of Nissen huts, have no chimney and no windows worth mentioning, while the door is barely two feet high, obliging those who enter through it to crawl in on all fours. These dwellings are grouped in small numbers, never more than four or five at a time, forming *munds* (in Toda *mad*), and are scattered all over the hills, near sholas, and often very far away from each other. This spread appearance is apt to be deceptive to begin with, as it would seem that each "village" is practically independent, and leads a life of its own. Actually this is not the case, since, regardless of the distance which separates various munds from each other (often twenty miles and more), tribal divisions make it perfectly clear which hamlets belong together and which do not.

The people have a fine physical appearance. They are, on an average, generally taller than most Indians, the tallest Toda being something like six foot six. The men are profusely bearded, and wear their hair

[1] Romanization of Toda here will be in accordance with the following personal transcription:

a = hat	ee = meet	ai = bite	l = lot	s = soon	v = vat
a = hut	f = fun	j = French	m = me	t = top	w = won
b = best	g = gone	dj = job	n = no	th = Greek theta	y = yoke
d = do	gh = Greek gamma	sh = she	o = hot	u = blue	z = zero
dh = Greek delta	ng = ring	tch = chap	ô = word	ù = simply tonic	
e = met	h = aspirate	k = kit	oi = hoy	ù = cook	
ei = date	i = hit	kh = Greek chi	p = pot	oo = moon	
			r = rot	ü = French	

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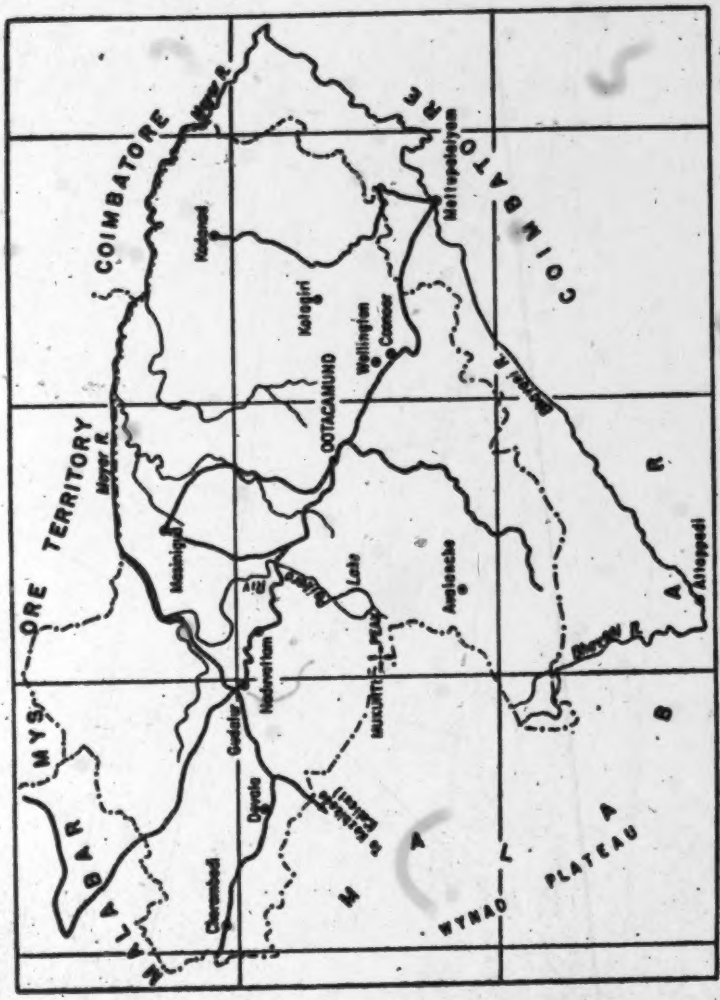

Map III. The Nilgiris. For the Toda *mods*, readers are referred to Rivers, *The Todas* (see Bibliography).

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302 The men are profusely bearded and wear their hair "bobbed", in a heavy mop without a parting. The women, when adult and married, dress theirs in very many long curls hanging down to their shoulders. They are elaborately tattooed on chin, torso, arms, 304 knees and feet, in imitation of necklaces, bracelets and bangles. The face is done before maturity, the arms, knees and feet after, while the necklace is added after the first child is born. Both sexes wear the 291 same clothes except for the under-garments: a toga-like wrap, the *putkuli*, white with edges striped red and black and sometimes enhanced by embroidery of the same colours. The Todas must be one of the few peoples in the world among whom men and women are dressed alike.

161 For the last decade the tribe has been a dying one, and from the personal census which I took with Kanvarsathi[1] in 1949, it appeared that there were only 488 Todas left. I give this census below; it was taken according to the principal mads, the names of which are given here in Toda, and not in Badaga which is otherwise the usual practice in the Nilgiris (for the corresponding appellations, see Rivers, *The Todas*, Appendix III, p. 734 and following):

103 No.	Name of *mads* (in Toda)	Men	Women	Children	Total
162 1	Karsh	12	8	0	20
2	Kishkier	4	7	2	13
621 3	Kitishu	7	6	1	14
4	Melgarsh	12	11	7	30
5	Mign	5	4	1	10
6	Poln	5	5	1	11
7	Tör	3	4	1	8
8	Paletkwar	4	3	3	10
9	Or	5	4	0	9
10	Kuur	3	2	1	6
11	Arjmad	2	1	0	3
12	Penavarsh	7	2	1	10
13	Nattersh	12	8	11	31
14	Nirgodah	2	1	1	4
15	Mörkor	3	2	4	9
16	Tögor	2	3	0	5
17	Apersgor	3	3	0	6
18	Pakharkwar	2	2	0	4
19	Kakhwarth	13	8	3	24
20	Paghor	7	4	4	15

[1] My interpreter, see Appendix 2.

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No.	Name of *mods* (in Toda)	Men	Women	Children	Total
21	Patdhue	4	4	0	8
22	Karie	7	5	4	16
23	Norsh	11	13	4	28
24	Tavatkhiur	5	4	3	12
25	Kiudi	3	2	0	5
26	Kiur	2	2	4	8
27	Molkursh	5	3	0	8
28	Tivalkun	3	2	0	5
29	Pudmad	4	3	8	15
30	Artalkh	13	9	6	28
31	Tarar	13	10	8	31
32	Mortkiar	3	5	3	11
33	Konorj	4	3	3	10
34	Nirkh	3	2	4	9
35	Inkit	6	7	3	16
36	Kwordhoni	13	8	2	23
37	Pörgarsh	6	6	1	13
	Total	218	176	95 *	488

* Of which 44 were boys and 50 girls.

In 1952, the Toda population had further dropped to the all time low figure of 475, but at the time of writing (1954), it seems that in the last two years there have been 58 births and 21 deaths only, which now makes the total number of the tribe 512 – in marked progress away from the tragic trend towards extinction, which has been so pronounced since the days of Rivers. This author mentions a census taken in 1901 (*The Todas*, pp. 469 & 473), but since that date, no reliable figures are available. That was the reason for which I decided to make my own count of the Toda population. Kanvarsathi and I went round to every single *mad* in turn, and apart from recording persons present, obtained reliable information about those who were absent at the time of our visits.

Apart from Europeans, Indian Maharajas and their staffs, domestic servants and shopkeepers who have come up from the plains with them, and the Mysorean cultivators whose numbers are growing continually, other inhabitants of the Nilgiris, who are indigenous, like the Todas, are the Badagas, Kotas, Kurumbas, and Irulas. Their relations with the original Nilgiri tribe, who look upon themselves as the "Lords of the Soil", believing as they do, that they were created there by their

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gods, are very close indeed; so close in fact that to know them really well it would be necessary to make a special study of them from the point of view of each of the five communities in turn. As others who have worked solely on the Todas before me, I am, however, only acquainted with these relations from the Toda viewpoint, and consequently can only briefly account for them here as described to me from that angle.

Of the four, the Badaga community is the largest. It is said, too, that it is the latest to have arrived in the Blue Mountains, but even so, this must have been quite a long time ago, as there are Portuguese descriptions of it going back for more than three centuries. The Todas consider the Badagas as practically their equals, and their name for them is *Mav*. They depend on them for much of their livelihood, as they are the agriculturists who supply them with grain, and all relations with the outer world are conducted to a large extent for the Todas through their intermediary. They pay a specified grain tribute called *kur* (Rivers' *gudu*) to the Todas, and the priests of the latter's most important temples may eat only Badaga grain (which includes rice) and none other. Furthermore a Badaga from the village of Tuneri is by right a member of the Toda tribal council, when it decides questions of inter-tribal importance, and at certain ceremonies in the principal temples, a Badaga, known as a *tikelvmav* has to be in attendance.

The Kotas, called *Kuv* by the Todas, are looked down upon by them and considered low-caste. They are the artisans who supply metalware and pottery to their neighbours, and, as is often the case with smiths in India, also music at festive occasions. They are indispensable at Toda funerals, where they have very distinct duties such as providing a band, giving cloth, grain, ceremonial bows and arrows, money etc. for the proper disposal of the corpse, besides taking away the sacrificed buffaloes which they eat.

The Kurumbas and Irulas are slight, dwarf-like aborigines who inhabit the forest-clad, malarial southern and western slopes of the Nilgiris. They are known respectively as *Kurub* and *Erl* by the Todas, who fear them greatly as sorcerers and magicians. It is on them, and principally the Kurumbas, that the tribe is dependent for its supply of bamboo vessels, of a certain long pole, the *tari*, used at funerals, and more especially of medicine, which appellation includes poison. The Todas make habitual use of the latter when they want to fight each other in personal or inter-clan feuds. In Toda mythology, the two last named of their neighbours as well as the Kotas, but not the Badagas, are mentioned.

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In religion, the Todas are definitely not Hindu. They do go on pilgrimage to Hindu shrines, and their diviners have some sort of esoteric contact with temples in Malabar. But the Toda faith is not of the orthodox Hindu kind, and their gods have quite different names and natures.[1]

Today, the Toda gods are very hazy figures. What has happened is that with the passage of time, ritual has come to play so important a part in religious practices, that a clear conception of the deities is now quite beyond the Todas. From the elders whom I questioned (especially Ujar, 48)[2] – they are the only persons who know something about this nowadays – I obtained, however, information concerning an intricate and rich mythology. This describes an early period in which the gods moved freely with men in the Nilgiris. They led the same kind of pastoral life as the latter do today, caring for their herds of buffaloes and processing their milk in their dairy-temples. Only some of these gods are reputed to be still present on the plateau, each living on the summit of a distinctive hill.

It will not be necessary to enlarge here upon the Toda religion. Rivers' account of it, to which readers are again referred, is, broadly speaking, accurate and exhaustive, and will be enough to give a very good idea of its nature. The principal gods most frequently mentioned by the Todas and about whom it will be sufficient to know in the present connection are the following: 1) *Ön*, the Lord of the Underworld (*Amnor*) to which he retired after a long period in the Nilgiris; while he was still living there, he created, together with his wife, *Pinakursh*, men (*Olkh* = Todas) as well as the Toda sacred buffaloes; 2) *Terkish*, the sister of Ön; she is by far the leading Toda deity, amounting to a protective tribal mother-goddess, of whom you hear continually; she is reputed to have stayed behind in the Nilgiris when Ön retired to Amnor; she has her earthly residence at the summit of a hill called Tödhut near Ootacamund; the Todas say that she is, however, omnipresent, to be found anywhere in the world; in their language, the Blue Mountains are called after her, *Terkishnor*, or the land of Terkish.

[1] During my last stay in the Nilgiris, it was my good fortune to discover what appeared to me to be eleven Sumerian deities among the six hundred or so gods and goddesses which compose the Toda pantheon, something which would go to indicate a very early cultural connection indeed with the world of Antiquity (*Possible Sumerian Survivals in Toda Ritual*, by the same author, see Bibliography).

[2] Whenever a Toda name is followed by a number such as here, the latter refers to the corresponding genealogical table in *The Todas*, by W. H. R. Rivers.

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776 Then come two important demi-gods: a) *Kwotèn*, a man-god whose fabulous life is closely associated with one of the Toda clans (that of Pan); Rivers believed him to have been an outstanding Toda personality who was possibly posthumously deified. b) *Kwoto*, another man-god; he is closely associated with the clan of Melgarsh; among the legendary feats which he is reputed to have accomplished is that of tying down the sun between two mountains and of taking it to drink at a stream every day, in order to prove to the gods, who had challenged him, that he possessed supernatural powers.

197 The language spoken by the Todas is a Dravidian dialect. According to Emeneau, it is more akin to Canarese (Kanada) than to Tamil, although it cannot be said to be a very close relative of the former either. All Todas are, anyhow, bilingual, and very often even tri-
191 lingual, conversing freely in Badaga with their neighbours and in Tamil with visitors from the plains. As they have no script of their own,
212 when they occasionally want to write something (such as commemora-
177 tive inscriptions on temple doors) they make use of Tamil characters. I have never seen them use Roman letters, but I have been told (by Miss C. F. Ling for instance) that although not habitual, this is sometimes also done.

234 The economy of the Todas is a pastoral one, large herds of great
433 horned buffaloes, which do not resemble those of the plains, being kept for their milk and milk products. Many of these animals are
[778] quite ordinary (*putir*) but the great majority of them are pedigree cattle of a sacred nature (*postir*), their ancestry being calculated through the cows. They are believed to have been given to the tribe by the gods. They are grouped in four principal categories, each graded hierarchically. Thus the lowest category is that of the *wursulir*, then come the
[778] *nodrovair* and the *Kugvalir*, and finally, the highest and most sacred of all, the *tiir*.

[648] Like other pastoral people, the Todas consider it degrading to take
24 [to agriculture, and repeated attempts by the Indian Government to induce them to till the soil have miserably failed. When given a field
427] to cultivate, they usually let it out to a Badaga for a nominal sum, preferring to carry on with their animal husbandry and its semi-nomadic form of life, a tradition deeply ingrained in them and to which they are greatly attached. Most of the milk, butter and buttermilk
[439] produced by the tribe is consumed by its members, but a certain amount is sold in the local market, and the money thus earned made use of to
433 buy other foods and everyday commodities. On the whole, the Toda
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economy is not a poor one, and the standard of living of the tribe is quite definitely higher than that of the average plainsman.

The dairyman with the Todas is the priest, and his processing of the milk produced by the sacred animals into butter and buttermilk is looked upon as a religious act. Ths takes place in specially constructed buildings which are dairies and temples at the same time. They are known by the generic term of *polkhthli*, and their degree of sanctity varies proportionally to the type of buffalo which they serve. Thus the highest dairy-temples are called *ti* (where *tiir* are cared for), the lowest *tarvali* (which is the *mad*'s, serving ordinary buffaloes or *putir*), and there are such intermediate ones as *wursuli* (for the *wursulir*), *kurpali* (for the *nodrovair*) and *kugvali* (for the *kugvalir*).

To each of these herds of buffaloes and to their corresponding dairy-temple, there is a priest-dairyman, who alone is allowed to milk the animals and process their milk in accordance with an ancient ritual, which consists mainly in the recital of stereotyped formulae, called *kwarshm*. The *ti* and *tiir* are served by a *palol*, who is highest ranking priest of the tribe, assisted by a *kaltmokh*; the *tarvali* or village dairy-temple is in charge of a *tarvalikartmokh*, while the *wursuli*, *kurpali* and *kugvali* have respectively a *wursol*, a *kurpalikartmokh* and a *kugvalikartmokh*. These priests are subjected to very strict rules of behaviour and ritual purity, and are recognizable at once by the black cloak of office which they wear, the *tuni*. The *palol* at the *ti* alone has to milk the very holy *tiir*, completely naked, except for a diminutive perineal band, the *kuvn* – no mean feat during the winter, in the cold and rarefied atmosphere at nearly 8,000 feet.

The Toda tribe, very homogeneous, consisting only of men and women of that name, is divided into two patrilineal, respectively endogamous moieties, that of the Tardharsh and that of the Teivilkh. I am purposely spelling these names at variance with the orthography of W. H. R. Rivers, because it appears to me closer this way to the manner in which the Todas pronounce them. Other words in this chapter which do not conform to the fashion in which the author of *The Todas* writes them are purposely spelt differently so as to be in keeping with what seemed to me a more faithful phonetic rendering of Toda speech.

The tribe considers the Tardharsh moiety as superior to the Teivilkh, and gives higher social status to the members of the former; in what follows, there will be numerous examples of this discrimination, which is continually encountered by anyone having anything to do with the

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Todas. Of the two divisions, it is the inferior one, that of the Teivilkh, which is the smallest. Rivers looked upon it as made up of later arrivals in the Nilgiris who were relegated to a subordinate position by the dominant Tardharsh (see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 691).

Priests of the high dairy temples, who, appointed to special offices which are not given to the ordinary *mad* dwellers, and in which they take it in turns to serve the village *tarvali*, are always chosen exclusively from the Teivilkh moiety. As an explanation of this apparent paradox, I was told that, despite the high ritual position which, for example, a *palol* occupies, he enjoys no superior social status, and is even looked upon generally as a servant of the tribe, fulfilling a necessary but definitely unenviable, strenuous and lonely occupation.

Within each moiety, there are patrilineal clans (or patrilineages) called *modol* (from *mad*, "village", and *olkh*, "man") and matrilineal descent groups (or matrilineages) which are known by the name of *polkhliol* (from *polkhthli*, "dairy-temple" and *olkh*, "man"). The Todas observe dual descent, and are very strict about it, especially in what concerns the exogamous rules which apply to each of these groups. They are particularly careful not to marry into the *polkhliol*, and will go to great lengths to avoid doing so, in order to remain on the safe side of this interdiction.

The span of both paternal clans and maternal descent groups varies considerably and readers are referred to Rivers book *The Todas* for an account of the *modol* (see p. 643 and following), and to my own publication *The Mothersibs of the Todas of the Nilgiris* (see Bibliography) for the *polkhliol*.

There are thirteen patrilineal clans and five matrilineal descent groups among the Tardharsh. Their names are as follows, classified according to the importance which the tribe gives to each of them:

modols	*polkhliols*
1. Karsh	1. Pirsh or Nör
2. Norsh	2. Kwoten-Pöldh
3. Tarar	3. Öntö
4. Mörorl or Pan	4. Kon
5. Kiaror	5. Pöth
6. Nirkh	
7. Konnorj	
8. Unkiti	
9. Kwordhoni	

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modols

10. Melgarsh
11. Pam or Pirspurs
12. Kidmad
13. Melgarsh outcastes sometimes also known as Karsh

The Teivilkh, the moiety of lower social status, has seven paternal clans and also five maternal ones, bearing the following names, which I give here too in order of what Todas consider greater importance:

modols	*polkhliols*
1. Kuur	1. Nonkothkpari
2. Omgarsh or Kusharf	2. Peffwitkoli
3. Pietari	3. Putkoiven
4. Kiötar	4. Migmoktueratvoi
5. Kulkhem	5. Arakködjittudyusillovoy (Strictly speaking these are nicknames and not actual names, the latter not being known any longer).
6. Kiemen	
7. Kwadenor (who are Kuur outcastes)	

Elders of the tribe know the genealogies of each individual many generations back (see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 461 and following). This is essential in order to avoid prohibited marriages, and, because the Todas are illiterate, the knowledge is memorized and expounded orally, as is the case among other peoples in this condition.

Political organization within the tribe is rudimentary. Each *modol* has a headman who is usually the eldest of the lineage. The Toda tribe as a whole, including both moieties, has a chief, the headman of the leading Karsh clan of the Tardharsh, known as the *Tuni-ngani-potvaylar*, whose temporal powers are very limited, but whose religious ones are slightly more considerable (for a fuller account of these, see *The Todas: Some Additions and Corrections to W. H. R. Rivers's Book, as Observed in the Field*, by the same author, see Bibliography). The Toda god, On, is believed to have been the first holder of this office, and the present members of the Karsh *modol* are supposed to descend directly from this deity through Ponetan, his son, and Karsh and Konarl, his grandson and great-grandson.

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642 With the arrival of the British in the Nilgiris, Mr. Sullivan, the first
622 European official, appointed a headman known by the Badaga name
148 of *monegar*. He was drawn from the Kuur clan of the Teivilkh moiety,
[614] without any consideration for the social organization of the tribe as a whole, and made responsible for the assessment of the sum which the Todas pay to the Government for their grazing rights, etc. The tribe looks upon this office, filled during my stay in the Blue Mountains first by Piliar (52) in 1939 and then by Pilkhliud in 1949, as that of a servant, entrusted with the task of acting as a go-between with the Indian authorities, and has no consideration for it at all.

642 There exists a supreme Toda council known as the *noim*, and
623 smaller *noims* are also in existence within each clan. These decide the
692 inner affairs of the *modols*, while the great *noim* deals with the affairs
[614] of the whole tribe. Its members are recruited from only four Toda clans, the three Tardharsh ones of Karsh, Norsh and Tarar, and the chief Teivilkh one of Kuur. And even then, they must come from sub-lineages within each of these clans. Its duties consist in the settlement of civil disputes arising between individuals, families and clans, and it also has wide functions in connection with Toda ceremonial.
[684] Its most important business appears to be the settling of disputes
[648] arising out of the custom of stealing wives from other men, and of deciding the amount of compensation due to the injured party. When affairs involving relations with the Badagas are in question, it is this assembly which a fifth member joins, a Badaga from the village of Tuneri, as has already been mentioned earlier (see p. 246).

2. CUSTOMS AND INDIVIDUAL WAYS WITH A BEARING ON A STUDY OF POLYANDRY

553 Children among the Todas receive their names very early. But whereas
858 this is done very simply in the case of girls – the grandmother, either paternal or maternal, of the oldest woman of the *mod* giving the little girl her name – it is done with great ceremony in the case of boys.

553 In the *per vasthpimi* ceremony, which takes place when the child is
852 three months old, at the time of uncovering its face (see Rivers, *The*
302 *Todas*, p. 331), the boy is taken by his father to where the buffaloes stand at the *mand*, and the hair of his head shaved off, but only across the middle from ear to ear leaving it long behind and in a fringe over the forehead. The father does the shaving, but it is the maternal uncle,
[604] the *mun*, who gives the name. He also promises to give a calf to the

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child, and salutes it in the characteristic Toda fashion, which consists of putting his head under each of the little boy's feet.

Naming sometimes also takes place at the *tersamtpimi*, but because this ceremony can only be held on the day after the second funeral (*marvainolker*) of a Tardharsh man, it is usual now to give a boy his name at the *per vasthpimi*. For the other occasion he has to wait approximately three years, and then when such a funeral has taken place, his *mun* will come to the village where he is living the day afterwards with a piece of wood of the wild rose. He will split the stick into two pieces, and grasping a lock of the boy's hair will cut it off with a piece of sharpened iron if he is a Tardharsh, and with an ordinary knife if he be a Teivilkh. The child will be given its name now by the maternal uncle if this has not already been done earlier at the face-uncovering, and it will be promised a calf.

The hair of little girls is also cut as in the *per vasthpimi* ceremony, but it is done privately without any fuss, by the child's mother. The *tersamptpimi* ritual of cutting a lock is held exclusively for boys and never for girls. Its main provision seems to be the taking of a lock of hair by the *mun*, giving a name being purely incidental, and actually hardly ever done nowadays. At approximately the age of ten, the hair of boys is allowed to grow again, and that of girls is curled and dressed in the traditional manner.

Toda men have to have their ears pierced, regardless of whether they wear rings in the holes or not. In the case of Teivilkhs, they cannot be priests unless this has been done, and in that of the Tardharsh, they cannot officiate as *tarvalikartmokh* before it has taken place. The operation is performed at any time before the subject is twenty years old, or sometimes at this age, and is the occasion of much feasting. Usually a number of young boys are taken all together, as a means of avoiding the great expense involved each time.

The piercing is done either on a Wednesday or on a Saturday, and only when no one is in a period of impurity following upon a death in a family (*ker*). Each boy is attended by his maternal uncle and by a man belonging to the moiety other than that of which he himself is a member. The *mun* pierces one of the ears, while the Tardharsh or the Teivilkh as the case may be, does the other. The instrument used is a piece of a gold ring sharpened to a needle-point. When all is finished, the boys bow down low to the attending crowd, and everyone is given food to eat by the families of those who were operated upon. Women, although they sometimes wear ear-rings, never have their

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ears pierced ceremonially, this again being reserved exclusively for men, for whom the utilitarian motive of the ritual seems to be completely non-existent. Toda boys put on the *kuvn* (perineal band) when they are five years old. The girls are given their wraps at the age of three. Children are separated from each other in accordance with their sex when, at eight, they start their respective social occupations.

It will be apparent from the above that members of the male sex receive preferential treatment among the Todas. This is something which strikes the observer at once, the advantageous social role of the men being very much in contrast to the subordinate one of the women. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that representatives of the female sex are, on the whole, badly treated. On the contrary, they have a free and easy look about them, and are, as a rule, well-cared for by their men folk. It is merely evident that they suffer from some very distinct social disabilities.

Thus Toda women are expected to deal with such household duties as pounding the grain in the house, sifting it, sweeping out the hut, making the *ertülkh* or sleeping platform and seat inside the *arsh* with cow-dung and mud, mending clothes and sometimes embroidering. They are also in charge of cooking, although Rivers thought, erroneously, that they could not deal with this domestic duty. They may also m[illegible]ordinary buffaloes or *putir*, something which Rivers also mistakenly denies. There are, on the other hand, a number of feminine "musts'. A Toda woman is obliged to greet all male relatives by putting her head under the man's feet in what is known as the *kalmelpudiththi* salutation. When she goes back and forth from the *mad*, she is compelled to follow a special path, the *majvatiithkatvol*, and may not use the ordinary one taken by men and outsiders. A stone, the *majvatvaiirn*, marks the point nearest to the dairy-temple at which she must stop. It is here that butter-milk (*maj*) is distributed to the womenfolk every evening at sunset by the dairy priests. They must not handle it, furthermore, when they are menstruating.

Woman may only exceptionally enter temples at funerals when the body of a man rests in the ante-chamber. They are excluded from most religious ceremonies and at the yearly procession through the village of Kiur, they must vacate the *mad* completely before its arrival. Women are not allowed to attend the sacred buffaloes (*postir*), or even to approach their pens. They may not drink their milk and are only allowed the buttermilk and the butter after it has been processed by the dairyman-priest. They cannot cross the dairy's stream (*pali nipa*),

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sacred rivers in general, nor climb holy hillocks upon which gods are supposed to live. They are not entitled to practise sorcery (I never came across a case of them doing so), to eat parts of the sacrificed calf of the *erkumptthpimi* ceremony (Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 274), to approach the spot where buffaloes are killed at funerals (for fear that they should see the bell of the temple upon which they are not allowed to set eyes), to attend the ceremony of offering a buffalo calf to a *ti-mad* called *irnörtit* (op. cit. p. 293); Teivilkh women are, besides, not permitted ever to visit the *mads* of the Tardharsh division.

The inferior status of women is further emphasized by sexual privileges connected with the office of the Teivilkh priests. Thus, the *tarvalikartmokh* has unrestricted access whenever he wishes to all women of the *mad* at which he is serving, even though these may be Tardharsh, that is, whom, normally, as members of the lower [illegible]iety, he may not approach. The *kurpalikartmokh* can sleep with the Tardharsh women of his choice, but only on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. The *wursol* may do the same on Sundays and Wednesdays only, and may not have any relations during the time that he is priest with any Teivilkh women, not even his wife if he is married. The *palol* of the *ti* may cohabit with the Tardharsh woman that he wants (from any *mad*) outside the precincts of the *ti-mad*, but within the sanctified territory, that is, in practice, in the *sholas* only (Rivers denies this, but I have confirmed it in *The Todas, Some Additions and Corrections to W. H. R. River's Book, Observed in the Field*, see Bibliography).

Todas prefer men to women to such a degree that female infanticide was, and is still to some extent, practised in the tribe, something to which we shall have occasion to revert further on. Toda society is a patriarchal one, in which the men are dominant and in which they treat their women, as most polyandrous people do, as their property. This belies the deceptive appearance of freedom which the females give on first acquaintance, an appearance which one very soon learns to appreciate at its true value when one gets to know the tribe better.

After adult marriage the bride always takes up her residence with her husband or husbands as the case may be, no known case of uxorilocal dwelling having ever taken place. She becomes a member of his or their *modol*, giving the latter a territorial appearance. At the same time she ceases to belong to her maiden one, but continues nevertheless to be part of her own *polkhliol*. Inheritance is always exclusively through the male line, the father's or fathers' brothers, the next of kin

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428 614 on the men's side of the *polm* (a subdivision of the clan in which members are grouped for certain economic duties incumbent upon them, see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 544) succeeding to the property of those men who die without male issue. There is never any adoption 597 of children and the custom is unknown.

614 The two moieties of the Todas are endogamous, Tardharsh marrying only Tardharsh and Teivilkh only Teivilkh. But inside each of these [616] sections, the paternal clans and matrilineal descent groups are strictly [837] exogamous. Extra-marital relations within these, when they occur – [582] which they undoubtedly do – practically exclusively take place between members of the paternal clans and never, it can safely be said, within the polkhliol. They are always considered incestuous. Avoidance of [835] this kind is pushed so far, at least in public, that when, for instance, I [123] once took Peidz of Karsh (44) for a ride in my car with one of the sons of Tilipa of Karsh (12), he refused to sit on the seat at the back with her but insisted on being next to me, because, he said, she was his classificatory grandmother.

582 Child-marriage is regularly practised, little Toda boys and girls being betrothed before they are three years old, preferably to their 584 *matchuni* or cross-cousin, that is, the son or daughter of their father's sister or of their mother's brother. If no *matchuni* properly speaking is available, some other child, classified as such by extension of the term in accordance with Toda kinship usages, is generally chosen, the rules of endogamy and exogamy being, of course, observed.

581 As is usual in India, the object of these child-marriages seems to be 584 mainly religious. It is considered that no one can properly accomplish his or her duties to the gods unless he or she is married. Death, [775] especially for someone single, would be a calamity, as he or she would not be able to enter Amnor and would wander aimlessly about as a [588] ghost. That is why, when a Toda child dies before being married, [766] however young (even only a few days), its body has first to be wedded to somebody appropriate before the funeral ceremony can be proceeded with.

595 The Todas are known to be polyandrous, and the custom is wide-178 spread and still very vigorous within the tribe. But they are not only that, being also polygynous, sometimes forming conjoint-marriages, and monogamous. I found them practising all these forms of marriage as widely as in the days of Rivers, although the latter did make the arresting remark that monogamy with them might well develop out of polyandry combined with polygyny, each of the men in such a species

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of what he calls "group marriage" tending more and more to look upon one of the women as his own (see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 519).

From what has been stated above, it will be clear that, because of many rules and regulations about whom one may marry and whom one may not, Todas, apart from child-marriage, find it difficult, when adult, to get themselves a wife. The number of women is very limited, and many of them are ineligible because of social barriers, so that not a few men would remain single were it not for the time-honoured custom of *terershti*, or that of the transfer of wives. Rivers describes the latter as a sort of peaceful pact which is negotiated at a meeting between the husband or husbands of a woman and a man or a group of men who wish to take her to wife, compensation (*ter*) to be paid to the losing party in buffaloes being decided first, (*terershti*, "compensation he decides", see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 523).

But when I was in the Nilgiris, transference of wives never took place except forcibly, and it was up to the *noim*, after the abduction had taken place, to fix the amount of animals that should be paid to the aggrieved party in compensation. Nowadays, no longer content with taking the case to the *noim*, some Todas are appealing direct to the Government for help, requesting even that the latter intervene actively to put an end to a custom which, with time, and no doubt because of outside influence, is becoming increasingly distasteful to them. So long, however, as there exists so great a disproportion between the numbers of men to women, and tribal regulations concerning moiety endogamy and clan exogamy are so strictly observed, there seems to be no other solution for the men to the dearth of wives than continually to be taking them from one another, while paying due compensation, so that all of them have at least a time during which they are married.

Some Toda women whom I have met have been wives to no less than seven men or groups of men, remaining with these for a year or so before being carried off again by another or others. Among them have been those who have taken pride in recounting how many buffaloes were paid in compensation for them, as in the eyes of the men their prestige seems to be in direct proportion to the importance of the figure. Women carried off leave their children if the latter are big enough, but take them with them to their new home if they are small. When they grow up, they will return to the clan of their official father.

Of course, what makes it easier for Toda men to accept polyandry and the stealing of each other's wives, is that fatherhood of the off-

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595 851 spring with them it not a physiological concept, but a socially legalized one. They are not the father of a given child simply because they are married to its mother or because they have procreated it physically; they are so because they have "given the bow and arrow" in the *pursütpimi* ceremony.

595 851 [843] The name means "bow we touch" and the ceremony takes place during the seventh month of pregnancy of a Toda woman – which appears as if the tribe realized that children can be born prematurely at that stage and live, and that therefore the determination of their paternity brooks no further delay. The occasion is the evening before the new moon. The woman, accompanied by the man who is to give the bow and arrow, goes to a *shola* near the *mad* at which she lives, and her companion cuts a triangular niche in a *kiersh* tree (Eugenia Arnottiana Wight) in which he places an earthenware Toda wick lamp, burning ghee. From the tree called *puv* (Sophora Glauca) they now fashion a miniature bow, by stretching a piece of the bark across a bent stick, and they equip it with an equally small arrow, made from *mark* grass (Andropogon schoenanthus). [824] [354]

In the meantime, the relatives of the man and woman have arrived at the spot and they are ritually saluted by the couple in the usual Toda manner. The woman's father promises to give a female buffalo calf, specifying in a consecrated formula which buffalo is its mother (in a case with which I was familiar (of Konokh and Mab of Kiur mund) it was the respective maternal uncles of the man and woman who made the promise and gave Rs. 5/- in cash). When this has been done, the woman goes and sits beneath the *kiersh* tree, facing the lamp in the niche above her.

The man then approaches her holding the bow and arrow and (in the instance mentioned above, he first thrice requested his father-in-law's permission to do this) addresses her so that all can hear, saying, after the *kwarshm* of his *mad*, the sentence: "*Terkishi Tirshk, pursvat!* (To Terkish and Tirshk, hold the bow)." The woman replies: "*Purs iveru?* (What is the name of the bow)" and the man answers her by giving the name for it which is that used in his clan, thus specifying for the onlookers that the child to be born will belong to his *modol*, as each of the Toda clans has another *kwarsh* name for the bow. Question and answer are repeated three times, after which the man gives the woman the bow and arrow. She raises it once to her forehead and, holding it in her right hand, lifts her eyes so as to gaze at the light in the tree trunk above her until it goes out for lack of fuel, something [W4]

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which can often last for nearly an hour. The relatives now depart and return to the village, leaving the man and woman to cook themselves a meal. They return later, however, and all spend the night together in the *shola*, before going back to the *mad* in the morning, when a feast, open to visitors as well, is held. 595 851

Performance of the *pursütpimi* ceremony determines once and for all the fatherhood of all children borne by a woman. It need not be repeated as long as it is desired that the same man should continue to be the father of other children brought into the world by the woman. Thus, dead men can well be considered the parent of later offspring, and will continue to be looked upon as such, unless a new *pursütpimi* ceremony with another man be performed.

In most cases it is the husband who is called upon to give the bow and arrow; in the case of a plurality of husbands, one of them, not necessarily the eldest, will do so, and it is not customary to repeat it with another one of the husbands when once done by one of them. That is why men who have failed for one reason or another to procreate children, will preferably carry off the pregnant wives of others, so that when they go through with the ceremony, they will, all the same, become fathers. This was the case with the famous Toda Kuriolv (22) who, having become impotent from a wound received from a buffalo which he caught in his youth at a Toda funeral, was, nevertheless, able to have legal heirs even if they were not his own physiological sons. In cases of pregnancy having been brought about by intermoiety concubinage, a man of the same division as the woman is obliged to give the bow and arrow when she reaches her seventh month, should no one have done this for her before. The child would otherwise be illegitimate, something unheard of with the Todas. [842] [684] [616] [848]

In accordance with this system of legally determining paternity, the legitimacy of the children is assured, as no case is known in which a man could not be found to perform the *pursütpimi* ceremony for a pregnant woman. Even in instances of premarital impregnation, the girl having been "married" at an early stage to her *mutchuni*, even if the latter is not available for some reason to give her the bow and arrow, some other suitable male partner will always be found for her. 851 848 836

When a woman is carried away from her husband or husbands to become the wife of another man or group of men, and is subsequently compensated for by a fixed amount of buffaloes, the proceedings are not considered by the Todas to be those of a divorce. With them, that is something quite different, with a decidedly disparaging connotation 586 [587]

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586 Rivers says that a man may divorce his wife for only two reasons, namely, either that she is a fool or that she will not work. He adds, however, that illness of the husband has also sometimes been regarded as a ground for divorce (Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 525).

But from my field-work in the Nilgiris, I gathered that the only real reason for a man wanting to be legally separated from his wife, was that she had co-habited with a non-Toda. He would then take one of his male buffaloes, tie a coconut shell round its neck in the presence of the *noim* which he had called together for that purpose. He would next cut off his wife's hair, beat her publicly, and end up by driving her together with the buffalo back to the house of his parents-in-law. I never actually saw this happen, but was assured on good authority (Kanvarsathi, Ujar (48), Sriar (20), Oknarsh (8) and Piliar (52)) that this was how it was done.

881 616 Before Toda girls reach the age of puberty, before their first menses, two things have to take place. First the ceremony called *putkuli tazar utiil* ("cloak over he puts") is performed. In it, a man of the opposite moiety to that of the girl (Teivilkh if she be Tardharsh, and vice-versa), comes to the *mad* at which she lives, during the day, lies down beside her on the *ertiilkh* of her *arsh* for a few minutes and puts his *putkuli* over both her and himself.

881 616 833 604 124 A fortnight later, if a Tardharsh, she will have to be deflowered by a Teivilkh, and if a member of the latter, inferior, moiety, by somebody from the opposite one (Rivers has "a man of strong physique", which is not accurate enough, see *The Todas*, p. 503). It is looked upon as a great shame for a girl to start menstruating before this has been done, which reminds me of what Duarte Barbosa says about Nayar virgins (see above, p. 170). I was naturally most intrigued by this belief, and, as Rivers alludes only in passing to the custom and does not offer any explanation, I decided to try and find out for myself what the reason for it could possibly be.

Naturally this was no easy task, as people were too shy to speak about it, but I pressed Ujar (48) to speak for over a month, considering him to be the man, because of his age, standing and disposition towards me, the most liable to talk. I gave him presents such as a bag of rice, a buffalo calf and spectacles, but still he was reticent, and I could see that, although he wanted to confide the secret to me in return, he was afraid to do so. Finally I elucidated from him that his apprehension came from the fact that he feared that should he speak in the Nilgiris, the gods would wreak punishment upon him. I decided,

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therefore, to take him right away, and on the 3rd of August, 1939, drove him down to the plains, near Mettupalaiyam, in order to question him far away from his hills.

I stopped at the side of the road when we had reached level ground, and, through Kanvarsathi – who was, incidentally, as curious as I to find out – requested him, now that we were out of *Terkish nor* (the land of Terkish), to speak. His answer was well worth the trouble I had taken, for he immediately replied, quite unexpectedly I must say, that unless this is done, "the maternal uncle of the girl will die".

I immediately pressed him for more. Why was it so, I asked, and how could such a thing have anything to do with the safety of the *mun*? He did not know, he said, it was just like that, and people had, of course, to guard themselves against this danger. To my next question as to what the maternal uncle could do to save himself if by any chance defloration had not taken place in this traditional way, he replied that he would still be safe if he could get hold of the girl and shave all her hair off. [302]

This talk with Ujar (48) later led me to a number of psychoanalytical speculations in an attempt to make sense out of what he told me, and in the course of lectures on the subject to various specialized bodies, interesting discussions on this point have taken place. I shall give an account of these in the publication which I am planning for later, on the psychological findings of my research (see Introduction, p. 15). [114]

Although the rules of endogamy within the two moieties of the Toda tribe, the Tardharsh and the Teivilkh, are very strictly observed, a regular system of concubinage and cicisbeism exists between them, organized as though to get round the difficulty. This is known as the *mokhthoditi* institution and it is an established feature of Toda social organization. 616 837 [595]

The origin of the custom, which is not restricted to inter-moiety cicisbeism and concubinage in practice, although it is so in principle, is said to be mythological. The god Kulinkarsh was the lover of the goddess Notirsh, without being married to her. The partners of the *mokhthoditi* are known respectively, the man as *mokhthodvaiol* ("the man who keeps the child"), and the woman as *sedvaitazmokh* ("the woman who joins the child"). It would probably be more correct to put these in the plural, since nothing theoretically really limits the number of persons to be joined in this way. In fact, however, the relation appears always to be between single individuals only. [773]

There are two different ways in which the liaison is carried on.

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616 837 Either the couple live together in the same *mad*, quite openly, or the man visits the woman periodically at the house of her husband or husbands. In the case of a Tardharsh being *mokhthodvaiol* to a [621] Teivilkh woman, because of the prohibition for those of her kind to visit the *mads* of the superior moiety, it always has to be her lover who visits her at her home. There is no objection on the part of the husbands as, in accordance with the formalities necessary to establish a *mokhthoditi* relation, they will have been consulted in advance and will have given their consent to the arrangement.

837 The usual way for a man to go about getting himself a *sedvaitazmokh* is, after having found the lady of his choice, to approach her husband or husbands, if she has any, or her father or fathers if she has none, and to obtain their consent to what he plans. He will agree to give the [431] men a present (such as a piece of cloth or a *putkuli*) in exchange, whereupon, if the other party is in accordance, he becomes the woman's *mokhthodvaiol* without any further formality. (Rivers has it that a third party may be called in to seal the pact, (see *The Todas*, p. 527) but none of my informants said this was done nowadays.)

Some time later, he will make collective obeisance to the lady's *pailol*, that is, her male relations (fathers and brothers). This is as in [588] a Toda marriage, there being no difference at all here between regular and irregular unions. On this occasion the man will promise to give the woman some pieces of jewellery, and her son, should she have one, a buffalo calf. It is after these promises have been made, that the *mokhthodvaiol* will perform the *kalmelpudithti* salution to the *pailol* and, significantly enough, after this has taken place, he will call his *sedvaitazmokh's* father *mun* as he would his wife's father or his maternal uncle.

While working at Melgarsh *mad*, I had the opportunity to see how such a *mokhthoditi* arrangement functioned. Amoniwuf, the common wife of the two brothers, Singharsh and Singhud, had a regular lover, a Teivilkh from Teir *mad* of the Kusharf *modol*, whose name I unfortunately have not recorded (his picture is shown on pages 56 and [113] 57 of Lidio Cipriani's *I Toda, Archivo per l'Antropologia e la Etnologia*, Vol. LXVII, 1937). Things seemed to go very smoothly, and all three men as well as the woman appeared happy and on the best of terms. The Teivilkh used to come regularly to Melgarsh, at least twice a week in the afternoon, staying until the next morning when he would go home again early. I was told that he had given Amoniwuf a very [431] nice gold necklace, which I was, however, never shown. The husbands

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had both received pieces of cloth from the cicisbeo of their wife.

So ingrained in Toda customs is the *mokhthoditi* institution that somebody who died without having either a *mokhthodvaiol* or a *sedvaitazmokh* would have to have one appointed after death so as to fill the place reserved for that person at the funeral rites. For cicisbei have an important function to fulfil on this occasion, and no ceremony would be complete without it. It is significant that a brother of the woman's husband is preferred in the case of such a posthumous appointment.

At the cremation of Ling Mish (23, called after Miss C. F. Ling!), a Tarar woman married to a man of the Norsh *modol*, on the 27th July, 1939, I saw her cicisbeo, a Teivilkh, come forward at the moment when her body had been prepared to be laid on the pyre, and insert with his left hand some limes, three handfuls of the grain which the Todas call *patcherski* (samai), jaggery, a piece of the dark *än* cloth, and the strings (*penor*) of his own *kuvn*, into the pocket of the deceased's *putkuli*. I was told that had she not had a lover, another man of the Teivilkh moiety would have been chosen to carry out this last rite it being essential to do so. Rivers says that the *mokhthodvaiol* should go to the funeral with his ring on the ring-finger of his left hand. He should make the *kalmelpudithi* salutation to the woman's father before the buffaloes have been caught, and afterwards insert the symbolic objects into his dead mistress's garment with his left hand – as if to mark that his relations with her were really *de la main gauche*. In the case of a man dying, exactly the same rites will be carried out by his *sedvaitazmokh*, except that she will not make obeisance to the man's father; her brothers will in her stead (see *The Todas*, p. 366).

The Todas always make a point of saying that they may not have any sexual relations, even clandestine, with non-Todas, and we have seen that a divorce from a woman can be sought for if she has been convicted of such an offence. It is, I was told, a particularly heinous crime for a Toda woman to have intercourse with someone not belonging to the tribe. In this way, we are led to believe, Toda racial stock has been kept "pure" throughout the centuries, and I have even heard it said by Indian physical anthropologists that the tribe is of a degenerate physical type, because there is too much intermarriage, and "the genes do not circulate enough".

And yet it seems that with the Muduga tribe of the Walluvanad taluk in Malabar there exists a definite institutionalised sexual relation based upon the hereditary friendship of some Todas with a few leading

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648 837 [114] families among the Mudugas. This has been clearly brought out by Professor C. von Fürer-Haimendorf in a short note published on his findings in Malabar (see *Man*, Vol. LIV, Feb. 1954, art. 24).

According to what he writes, those village headman at Pottikal who have a traditional friendship with certain Todas receive the latter at least once a year in their homes for several days. Each of them vacates his house completely, leaving, however, his wife to look after the Todas (usually brothers) who then assume the role of "husbands" towards her. In return, when the Muduga headman pays back the visit at the *mad* of his same Toda friends, he has access to their wife and sleeps with her as long as he is staying in the Nilgiris. Neither of the parties [842] apparently believes that conception can result from such passing intercourse, which perhaps accounts for the tolerance shown by the Todas towards their women's sexual relations with a stranger. I feel sure, however, that it would be impossible to discover anything about this practice from the Nilgiri tribe itself, and it is certainly due to the fact that Professor von Fürer-Haimendorf was working among the Mudugas and not among the Todas that he was able to hear of its existence at all.

838 I enquired repeatedly about homosexuality during my two visits to the Todas, and kept my eyes open for any evidence of it. My questions on this subject seemed to provoke merriment, and the men would usually laugh when interrogated about it. As far as I could make out, there does not seem to be much proclivity towards it, either among men or women. While with the latter I could record no case at all, even from hearsay, with the other sex at least there seemed to be some reason to believe that Tilipa (12) of the Karsh *modol* was inclined that way. A pleasant old man, with long curls and an effeminate manner, [684] he was reputed to have been caught a number of times with men [623] younger than himself, to the intense amusement of the tribe, and to have been fined by the *noim* for this misdemeanour. He was married to a masterful, viriloid woman, who bossed him about in no uncertain manner, and from whom he had "had" four fine sons. It was whispered, however, that he was only the legal father, having given the bow and arrow for them, while another was their physiological sire.

158 828 Neurosis was a question very difficult to go into, working as I was through an interpreter, and having no means by which to delve very deeply into the individual psyche. Here too, appearances seem to show that there was little of it about, the complex social organisation of the tribe affording plenty of outlets for the feelings, emotions and drives of ill-adapted persons. Pangur, son of Piliar (52), however, was a case

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in point, the only one I really came across. A man in his thirties, he was reputed to be a wanderer, travelling incessantly over the Nilgiri downs without any home at which to stay. He was not known to have any attachments at all, let alone feminine ones, and the explanation for this which I obtained from Kanvarsathi was illuminating. Pangur was supposed to have been excessively repressed in childhood, so that he had never got over the habit of masturbation. Again, I was struck by the very orthodox psychoanalytical nature of this interpretation coming from a people who have no notions of the modern development of psychology in the West. It was as if their lack of prudery in sexual matters coupled with a primitive commonsense were sufficient to make them understand these things much better than anyone in our societies would.

Both the Todas and the local Indian medical practitioners whom I interrogated on this question, said that they had never heard of or seen any case of insanity in the tribe. And this in spite of syphilis being (or having been until lately) rampant among them, although, it seems obvious, only in a mild form which does not bring about nervous disorders such as with us.

Suicide, on the other hand, was far from unknown, and numerous instances could be cited. Formerly, the recognized method of doing away with oneself was, as Rivers has recorded it (see *The Todas*, p. 555): hanging with a *kakhudri* (Dregea volubilis, Benth) creeper. This because Erten, described as the servant of the man-god Kwotèn, is said to have killed himself in this way, after his master had been carried away by the goddess Terkosh (see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 201). Nowadays, however, opium has taken the place of this more antiquated method, a habit which, it is considered, has been adopted from the Badagas. Sriar's father, Izcheidi (20), thus committed suicide by taking the drug, because his wife had been carried away from him. because Erten, described as the servant of the man-god Kwotèn, is said have ended her life by taking opium after the death of her son.

Concerning crime, Rivers says: "It is, however, doubtful whether crime can be said to exist among the Todas," (*The Todas*, pp. 553–4). Certainly the tribe appears to be made up of remarkably meek and peaceful individuals, they having no arms at all, a rare occurrence among any human beings on earth. Nor is there any indication that they ever had any. From questioning I gathered that Todas often quarrel, shouting and even beating each other with the very attractive walking-sticks which it is their speciality to manufacture. But nothing

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578 674 worse was, to begin with, ever brought to my notice by my informants.

When, however, I delved more deeply into the matter, I soon found out that appearances were very deceptive, and that under a peaceful exterior, many serious acts of aggression had taken and were still taking place. Personal feuds of intense hatred and jealousy, especially among [754] the older men, seemed to be the reasons for what were not just empty accusations of witchcraft, but unmistakably crimes, and I gathered so much evidence of this that I have come to think that there are very [682] few influential old Todas who die a natural death. They are more [648] usually done away with by their rivals, through the time-honoured method of having them poisoned by the Kurumbas, mainly, I think, with *datura*.

578 682 [754] 115 [662] Thus Karnoz of Melgarsh (45), whom I got to know very well, was greatly feared as a *pili* (sorceret). When I returned to the Nilgiris for the second time in 1949, I found that he had reputedly done away with Ujar (48), my old and trusted informant, his uncle and chief of the Melgarsh *modol*, simply because he wished to take his place at the head of the clan. He had had him poisoned by his "own" Kurumbas, as it was put to me, after having first got the deceased's wife and two children out of the way in the same manner. The remaining members of the murdered man's family had fled in terror to Kakhwurkh *mad* and their house stood empty and forlorn at Melgarsh when I came back there in 1949. Karnoz was fined Rs. 12 by the *noim* for this [683] crime and warned that, if he persisted in practising sorcery, his house [623] would be set on fire, and he himself killed.

While working with the widow of Kuriolv (52), whom Rivers describes in such eloquent terms (see *The Todas*, pp. 551–2), my wife discovered that, after having rid himself of rivals and wives alike by the habitual [648] Toda method of indirect poisoning through the agency of the Kurumbas, he was himself murdered in the same way by his wife. He ended his life practically at the same time as his rival and victim Arjgur (56) who, in a neighbouring house at Kuur, died from the effects of the poison which he, Kuriolv, had himself administered to him.

During my second stay in the Nilgiris in 1949, Piliar (52) poisoned Tödhem of Apersgor because he had had a son by a woman whom Piliar had given up, believing her to be barren. The deed was com- [761] mitted by a Kurumba in Piliar's pay who gave the poison with some [123] milk to Tödhem at a funeral which I attended. I later tried to get the [757] ailing man to hospital in Ootacamund in order to look better into his case as well as to try to save him, but to no avail. I came up against

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the stubborn resistance of Piliar, who stood guard at the door of Tödhen's house at Apersgor, and who assured me that "Toda and Western medicine do not mix". Curiously enough, the victim agreed with his tormentor, and refused to follow me. In such cases the man usually resigns himself to a death which he feels the gods desire, but Tödhen somehow, in this case, recovered and did not die.

3. TODA POLYANDRY

The custom of polyandry is a very old one with the tribe. When questioned, the Todas will tell you that they have always practised it, and that its origins are unknown – it seems so natural a form of marriage to them. Their mythology mentioned polyandrous gods, therefore, obviously, they say, this type of matrimony has always existed.

Terkish, it seems, married an ordinary Toda called Püth who, after his death was deified. With him, the mother-goddess of the Nilgiris had thirteen children, eleven boys and two girls. None of these children married, except two of the sons, Podzövördjen and Pödjövorj, these polyandrously to an ordinary Toda woman called Notirsh. She too, after her death, became a goddess, now well-known to all Todas. From this polyandrous marriage of the gods, Kwotèn, the man-god who ran after Terkosh and was eventually carried off by her (see p. 265), was born. He married Mütürpani, a Toda woman and not a goddess, and had two sons by her, Koltawutn and Kshörwutn, of whom there are still descendants alive today (at a *mad* called *Kiaper* according to my 1939 notes, which I unfortunately have not been able to identify since; the late Ujar (48) having been my principal informant for the above).

Toda polyandry is mostly fraternal, as is usually the case elsewhere as well. But there are some cases of non-fraternal polyandry, although I, personally, found that, in those cases, the husbands were clan-brothers, that is, of the same clan and of the same generation which, in accordance with the classificatory type of Toda kinship, makes them look upon each other as brothers. Thus Wunkwur and Manarn of Norsh were married jointly to Puvamut of Tarar and lived together at the Norsh *mad*, where I often had occasion to visit them. She had been married to the first of her husbands (sons of two brothers) because he was her *matchuni*; then Wunkwur took her to wife from his cousin by paying Manarn a certain amount of buffaloes, but after some time, the latter returned and by giving half of the buffaloes back was accepted again as Puvamat's husband. *Pursütpini* was, however, performed for

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595 her by Wunkwur. Kanvarsathi assured me that there were other such non-fraternal cases in outlying *munds*, but I did not come across any.

114 My impression was that the polyandry of the Todas is tending more and more to be restricted only to real brothers, in the way we use that word.
595 Rivers in his book does mention a number of instances in which non-brothers, not even classificatory, are married to the same woman (see *The Todas*, pp. 515–516), but although I searched for some, I was unable to find any in existence today. Rivers already remarked in his time: "It is possible that at one time the polyandry of the Todas was not so strictly 'fraternal' as it is at present." (*The Todas*, p. 516.)

Rivers' description of the marriage of *matchuni* seems to imply that such weddings are monogamous, (see *The Todas*, pp. 512–513). I enquired about this when in the Nilgiris, and was told that it was not necessarily, although admittedly generally, so. There have been recorded cases of polygamous unions of this type, both polygynous and polyandrous, the latter being, rather naturally with the Todas, the more usual of the two. My informants could not take me to see any such case existing at the time, but assured me that they had known some. There was nothing in Toda custom to forbid it, they assured me (see also, *The Todas, Some Additions and Corrections to W. H. R. Rivers' Book, Observed in the Field*, by the same author, see Bibliography).

648 Professor Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf has shown, in his short
837 note about *Heriditary Friendships and Inter-Tribal Sex relations be-*
[114] *tween Todas and Mudugas* (see Bibliography), that such relations of the Todas with their Muduga hereditary friends are definitely not limited to one man, but include a number of brothers. In this case, of course, we are not dealing with a regular marriage. Inversely, the Muduga headman whom he mentioned has access to the common wife of the two Toda brothers who are his friends, whenever he pays back their call in the Nilgiris, although the Mudugas themselves, like most more primitive people, do not practise polyandry. The type of established, even institutionalized, sex relation described here, seems definitely to follow the Toda pattern and not the Muduga one.

595 About sixty per cent of the Todas are polyandrous. I did not actually take count of exactly how many there were, because as the community is continually in flux with regard to marital arrangements, principally because of the *terershti* institution, figures would not have meant very much anyhow. But Kanvarsathi worked it out that the number of polyandrous marriages must involve just about that percentage of the whole tribe's number, and I have no reason to doubt the accuracy of

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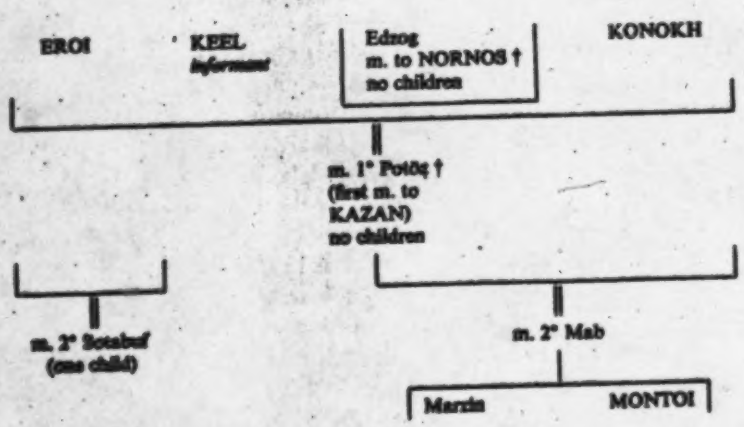
TABLE 21. GENEALOGY OF THE ARSHMAD OF KUUR (TEIVILKH) MODOL. 601 595



Note: This is how Kool described it to me, but according to Rivers it would seem that Eroi had been married twice before, Kool and Konokh once each respectively, and the girl, Edrog, at least four times previously, twice polyandrously to successively three and two husbands (see Rivers, *The Todas*, genealogical table No. 56). [587]

Males in capital letters
Females in small type
† = dead
m. = married

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595 [621] [592]

his estimate. As it was, I found nearly always at least two polyandrous households in every single *mund* that I visited in 1939, and never one in which there was no polyandry.

At Or, a *mad* belonging to the Norsh *modol*, I found four brothers married to one woman, with the two elder brothers married to another woman, and living with her in another house a little further away. At Pakharkwur, a Karsh *mad*, a man named Nipö, already father of five girls, had lately been joined by his younger brother, because the latter had recently lost his wife, and the mother of the children had had to accept him as a husband as well. Here also, two other brothers had one wife in common, and, as in the previous case, had put up a separate household close-by. Another good example of polyandry among the Tardharsh moiety of the tribe (to which the above mentioned people belonged), was that of the Melgarsh *etumad* (chief *mad*), in which there were three older men sharing one wife, and their three sons married in the same way to a single woman. In a separate house of the *mad*, two cousins of the previous men had likewise a common wife between them. We shall return more fully to Melgarsh in the second part of this chapter, when the account of the special study which I made in 1949 of that *mad* will be given.

601 595

Among the Teivilkhs, I also found many polyandrous unions when I visited the Todas for the first time in 1939. Thus at Kiur, a Kuur *mad* I saw two brothers with one wife in common, the mother of one child. At Arsh *mad* (Badaga name: Anekkalmund), belonging to the same Kuur *modol* of the Teivilkh, I met Eroĭ, Keel and Konokh (56), the last two living polyandrously with a woman called Mab, after they had earlier shared another one called Potöz. I found these people so friendly and interesting that I stayed some time with them in order to become better acquainted with their history and way of living.

On June 19th, 1939, I made their genealogy, which was then as recorded in Table 21.

[584]

Potöz, to whom the three brothers had earlier been married polyandrously, had herself first been betrothed, I was told, to her *matchuni* Kazan, at the age of two, as is the Toda custom. When she came of age, however, after due compensation had been paid to Kazan's family, she married the three brothers from Arshmad, but fell ill very early and died before she could bear them any children.

[467] [587]

Then the following occurred: Eroĭ found employment as a government peon, and decided to leave the association. He married the girl called Sotabuf, took away one third plus two of the buffaloes owned

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jointly by himself and by his brothers, and founded his own home elsewhere (at Kuudi *mad*, of the Pietarl *modol*). After he had left, the next eldest brother, Keel, went and asked Mab's parents if he and his brother Konokh could marry their daughter. The latter was already married, and so a long discussion ensued about how many buffaloes should be paid in compensation to the husband. Finally an amount of nine buffaloes was decided upon between Mab's father and the *noim*, called together specially to decide the case, (the husband was blissfully oblivious of all this, as is usual; had he discovered what was going on, he could have summoned Keel before the *noim* to explain himself and have asked for him to be fined if he did not really marry his wife Mab). Keel thought this amount of nine buffaloes too much, and departed in a huff, taking the other third plus two of the buffaloes with him. Konokh, more accommodating, however, accepted, and Mab became his.

Soon after her first pregnancy and before the birth of Marzin (for whom Konokh, the only husband at the time, gave the bow and arrow), Mab's father died. On hearing this, Keel decided to return home, and to share his brother's wife with him. Fortunately he had not married in the meantime, otherwise he would not have been allowed back, it seems. He had first to obtain the consent of Mab, of her mother, of her brothers and of Konokh, and having been given permission, he joined the marriage as a second husband. He brought the buffaloes he had taken away with him back again, gave one to Konokh and one to Mab's brothers, merging the remainder with those of his brother so as to share them jointly as before. He also paid Rs. 3 to the *noim* to regularize his reunion and make it publicly recognized. Montol, the boy, was born later, the fruit of this polyandrous marriage, but Konokh remained the official father, as he, although the youngest, had performed the *purstitpimi* in the first instance.

The arrangements about buffaloes as described above are by no means the usual ones with Todas, each man generally owning his own, even in polyandrous arrangements. Contrary to other people who practise polyandry, the Todas do not habitually share their property in common, and do not fear to divide it. Practically their only wealth consists of their herds of buffaloes, and these they distribute among themselves regardless of their family attachments. With the Todas it can definitely be said that polyandry and the ownership of property are in no way related. We shall see some good examples of this when we analyse to whom the buffaloes of Melgarsh individually belong.

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601 It was when Sotabuf was expecting her first baby that I was able to
123 see for myself the *urvatpimi* ceremony described by Rivers in his book
[843] (*The Todas*, p. 315 and fol.). This was on the 12th July, 1939, when the child was expected to be born four months later. I never found out of what sex it eventually turned out to be, and have thus had to leave this unspecified in the above genealogy. In 1949, when I was in the Nilgiris
[164] for the second time, Keel fell seriously ill with a bladder infection. I took him to the local hospital, where the doctor and staff did what they could to help, but to no avail. He died shortly afterwards, and his body
[578] was cremated on the 1st September. Incidentally, it was at this funeral
[682] that Tödhen, mentioned above, was allegedly poisoned by Piliar (52) with the ensuing results which I have described earlier (see p. 266).

601 With a classificatory kinship system such as the Todas use, there is
614 not much distinction in the appellations used to designate the various fathers that a man may have. The generic term for father is *In* or *Aia*, the latter being employed more often as the form of address. These names are used to describe not only one's own immediate fathers, but also all those elders of the *modol* and of the *polkhliol* which are classified as such: males of the clan who are the same generation as the fathers, and husbands of the sisters of the mother, including husbands of all those who are of the same clan and same generation as the mother. Elder fathers (that is, both real and classificatory) are known as *Perudaia*, while younger ones are called *Karudaia*. In the Melgarsh family, of which I made a special study, while Pads was the *In* or *Aia* because he had given the bow and arrow to Silidz, Karnoz, being the elder, was
[595] *Perudaia* and Purshwuö, the youngest, *Karudaia*. But these appellations could just as well have been used to designate elder and younger classificatory fathers of the clan and mother-sib, and as such are unreliable to distinguish between the different immediate fathers whom children of polyandrous households may have.

595 With the Todas, a very conservative and patriarchal people, the rule of primogeniture is strictly observed. Whereas among other polyandrous people, I found that dominance at home was more a question of personality than of seniority among the fathers, with the Nilgiri tribe, the eldest brother is always considered the head of the family, even if a younger one has given the common wife the bow and arrow, and is thus publicly recognized as the legal father of the offspring. There is only one case in which he may relinquish his rights, and that is if he has left with another woman and his share of buffaloes to put up a separate household of his own. Thus Karnoz at Melgarsh, after he had

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married Nalsirwuf, ceased being head of his immediate family (although he was chief of the Melgarsh *modol*) and Pads, who already was the legal father of Mutnarsh, Kuddhue and Munbokwutn, became so in his place. The mother never has any very important say in family matters, and is treated as nothing more than an exalted kind of house servant.

As I have shown when discussing the question of Toda aggression, there is considerable jealousy among members of the tribe, in such matters as property and prestige. In sexual matters, however, there seems to be less of it, no doubt because their institutions allow for a number of outlets for their varying sexual fancy. Thus, the custom of *terershti* allows a man to carry off the neighbour's wife whom he covets, provided compensation in buffaloes is paid to the aggrieved party, and that of *mokhthoditi* for him to take as partner any woman of the tribe regardless of the moiety to which she belongs. There are other examples that could be quoted, such as, for instance, the privilege enjoyed by the lower class of Teivilkh priest of free access to all the women of the *mad* in which they serve and the Toda-Muduga exchange of wives of which Fürer-Haimendorf has spoken.

In spite of this, however, Kanvarsathi and various of my informants were unanimous in stating that sexual jealousy did exist among the Todas and, as they said, "more than it used to". There is a growing modern trend of resistance to *terershti*, the authority of the *noim* in such matters being often challenged now by an appeal to the Government. Again, informants claimed that the Todas did not take so readily any more to polyandry as before – although I, personally, could not see any falling away from this traditional form of marriage. The fact is, however, that jealousy with the Todas is not as curbed as it is with other polyandrous people. Because the property is divided between the brothers, it is as if jealousy were not banned as a serious threat to economic well-being as it is with others. The Todas, to put it briefly and in the language of polyanders elsewhere, "can afford to be jealous", and they are so at times with those outbursts of homicidal violence of which I have spoken earlier, when treating of the subject of their aggression.

Regulation of sexual intercourse in a Toda polyandrous household is again a matter af tacit understanding between the plural partners. Asked if there were any signalling system, my informants without exception ridiculed the idea, stating that it might perhaps have existed in the past but certainly did not now. During my entire stay in the Niligiris, I never came across any evidence of it. In the Melgarsh family, which I specially studied, it appeared that the common wife, Erzigwuf, had no

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595 833 little say in the matter. Whether this is generally true of other Toda households, I cannot say, not having studied them in such intimate detail as the Melgarol (people from Melgarsh). It was Erzigwuf who would decide which of the three brothers, Mutnarsh, Kuddhue, or Munbokwutn, she would have with her for the night. She usually slept with [732] the eldest, Mutnarsh, and while I was in the Nilgiris would have nothing [845] to do with Kuddhue because he being a cripple, she feared that he was [787] the cause of her having twice given birth to twins (an evil omen with the Todas). I rarely saw the youngest, Munbokwutn, join her; so much even, that I enquired once if he ever slept with her. To which I got the reply that if he did not, he would not stay. Erzigwuf's predilection for Mutnarsh was due to her preferring him, I felt, because he had the strongest personality. He was also the eldest which, even if it did not prejudice the common wife in his favour, did undoubtedly contribute to give him the assurance and poise which attracted her.

833 I enquired which was the usual position in which these people had coitus, and heard that it was that in which the woman lies on her back with the man on top of her, between her open legs. Only the inhabitants [186] of Malabar "do it the other way round", I was told, not without a certain amount of amused sarcasm. I also heard that copulation never [352] took place, and should never do so, on the *ertülkh*, the raised earthen [515] platform which serves as a bed and seat inside a Toda *arsh*. But as I received contradictory information on this point (others assuring me that it was, on the contrary, just there that couples made love), the latter should be accepted with reservation.

842 [171] No kind of birth control is practised at all, as is generally the case all over India. This is, to a large extent, due to ignorance, and where this is not so, to religious convictions, the former of these two reasons being probably dominant with the Todas. It is so in spite of a very 831 active and varied sexual life of both sexes within the tribe, something which strikes even an untrained observer at once. Toda women, I was told by Kanvarsathi, "think of nothing else (than sexual intercourse), escaping whenever they can into the *sholas* to copulate with men of their choice". Emeneau has recorded in *Language and Social Forms: A Study of Toda Kinship Terms and Dual Descent*, p. 173 (see Bibliography), that the Todas are "vigorously and adventurously sexual". He also says, further on: "Ordinary marriages within the moiety and the freedom allowed in changing mates, and the *to:tjoff* (*terershti*) institution providing for sexual unions overstepping the boundary between the moieties give evidence of a high degree of sexual activity." He goes on

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to note that there "are many more irregular liaisons, not provided by overt institutions, and indeed punishable by fines if discovered". Of course, with a system of child-marriage and of socially determined paternity through the *pursiitpimi* ceremony, both of which to a large extent guard against the danger of illegitimate births, the fear of begetting children out of wedlock is much less than in other cultures, and consequently does not act as much as a deterrant here, with the Todas, as it would, I suppose, elsewhere.

In spite of careful questioning and observation, I could find no cases of impotence with men or of frigidity with women. Kuriolv, as recorded earlier (see above, p. 259), was evidently an exception in this regard, but his was a physiological impotence, due to a past accident while catching a buffalo at a funeral, and cannot, therefore, be considered as contradicting these findings.

B. SPECIAL STUDY: MELGARSH

This special study of the Melgarsh mund of the Todas of the Nilgiris has already been published in part in *Drives, Affects, Behaviour*, Edited by Rudolph M. Loewenstein, M.D. at the International Universities Press, Inc., New York, 1953. It is, however, elaborated in what follows with special emphasis on the anthropological description of polyandry within one family unit; observation of the children's behaviour is the subject of an addendum.

1. THE MELGARSH CLAN

The Melgarsh clan belongs to the Tardharsh moiety, but it differs in many ways from the others of its kind. Because of this, it appeared to W. H. R. Rivers as intermediate between Tardharsh and Teivilkh, and he even put the hypothesis forward, denied, however, by the Todas, that originally it may have belonged to the latter half of the tribe.

It is not necessary here to go into all the differences that put Melgarsh at variance with the other Tardharsh clans; readers interested in the subject are referred to Rivers' book. Suffice it to say that the Melgarsh people enjoy special privileges in connection with the dairy-temples – such as supplying *wursols* and *kaltmokhs* (the latter, attendants of the *palol*), taking food and buttermilk in the sacred enclosures of the *timad* – the exclusive right of milking a buffalo to provide milk for a

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[Melgarsh Village]

614 Tardharsh woman coming out of a post-confinement seclusion hut, per-
554 mission not to shave their heads after funerals as other Tardharsh do, etc., which definitely make them feel apart, if not superior.

361 The name of the clan is derived from that of its chief *mad* which is
614 situated practically within the very town of Ootacamund, in the vicinity of Government House and the Botanical Gardens. Other *mads*, four in
621 number but not always inhabited, are spread out over the Nilgiris, the principal one after Melgarsh proper being Kakhwurkh, south of the Ootacamund-Gudalur road, at the 8¾ mile.

361 The *etumad* (chief village) was chosen as the object of this study,
621 because it was occupied almost exclusively by one family group, whose characteristics made it eminently suitable for the study of polyandry and
[121] of the upbringing of children in so unusual a setting. Situated at an altitude of 7,500 feet, it was a typical Toda settlement, consisting of four houses (*arsh*), a large buffalo pen in which the animals belonging to the various individuals of Melgarsh were kept, and extensive grass
[312] expanse for early and late grazing, a *tarvali* dairy-temple, two water
[244] streams (one for the house, the *ordh* or *arsh nipa*, and one for the temple, the *pali nipa*, as is customary) and a small adjacent potato field which the local government officials had insisted on the Melgarsh people cultivating.

A plan of the *mad* as described above is given in Fig. 18.

621 The family principally in occupation of the *etumad* consisted of three generations of Melgarol, there being two sets of polyandrous fathers, that of the grandfathers and of the fathers and seven small children in the last generation, whose ages ranged from fourteen years to newly born; there were, besides, two pairs of twins among the younger children, each made up of a boy and girl.

The genealogy of these people is given in Table 22.

Living together with this family, and closely related to them, were also other Melgarol, whose houses were, however, not the same. In Table 23 I give the genealogy of Nodzer's descendants, the widow Odzel being a resident of Melgarsh.

Then came the more distant relatives, as shown in Tables 24 and 25.

Now, let me give a short, personal description of each of the individuals living at Melgarsh at the time of my study (in italics in the above genealogical tables). We will begin with the eldest and finish with the more distant relatives also residing in Melgarsh.

[159] (1) Odzel: She is an old lady, very quiet and retiring, the oldest of the *mad*, who mixes very little with the others and spends her days

[text continues on p. 280]

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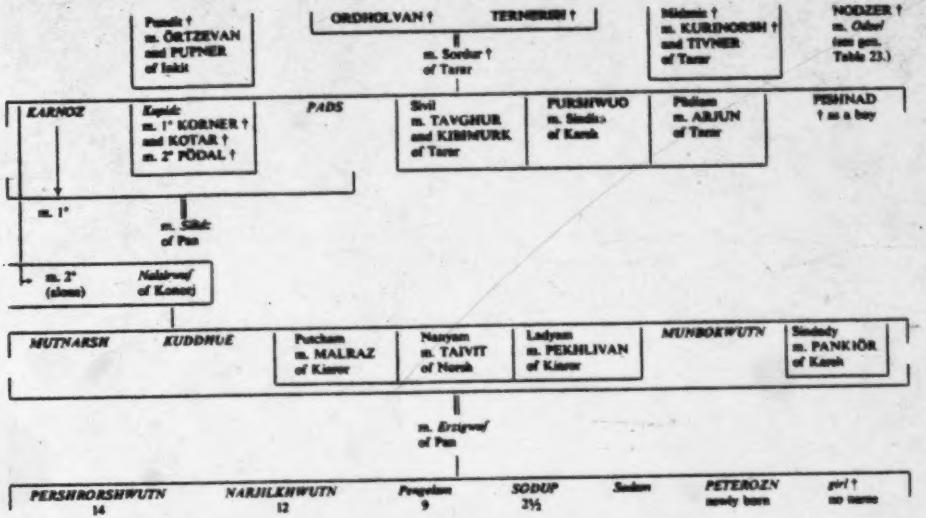
[Gaoima p.276]

Table 22. Genealogy of Melgarsh (Tardharsh) Modol: the principal family of the Melgarsh Etumad.



Note: The name of the clan to whom outsiders belong is given after the name of someone married. The ages of the children are given in figures below their names.

Conventional signs as in Table 21.

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621
614

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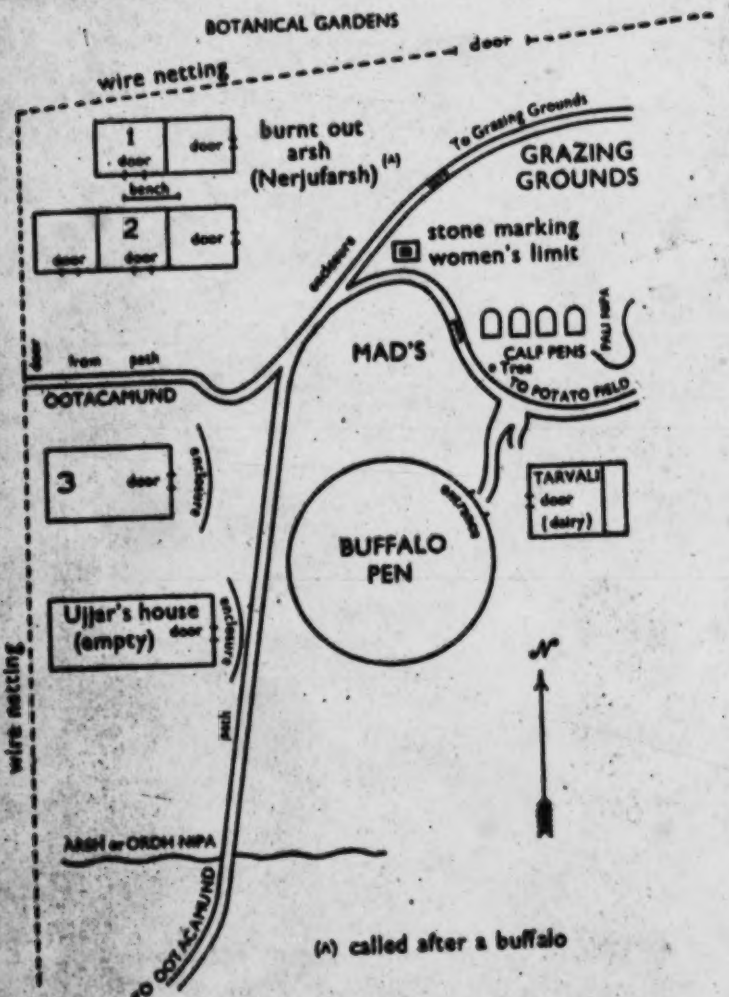

(A) called after a buffalo

Fig. 18. Plan of the Melgarsh *mund*.

361
417
487
234
312
621
342

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621
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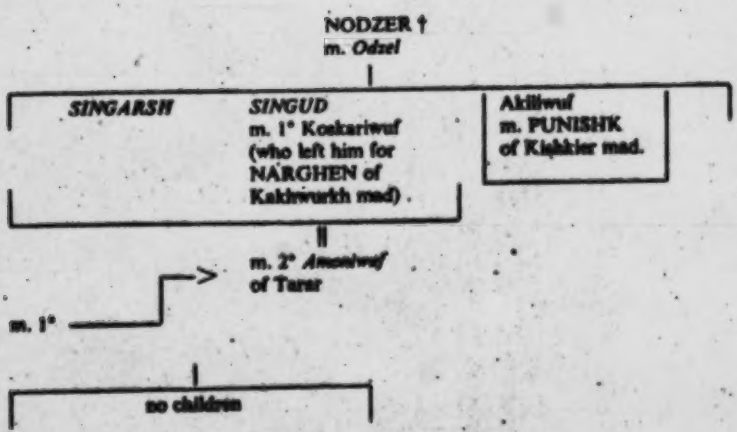
TABLE 23. GENEALOGY OF MELGARSH (TARDHARSH) MODOL: DESCENDANTS OF NODZER LIVING AT MELGARSH MAD.



Conventional signs as in Tables 21 and 22.

13:Peter E-5 (1939,1949)1963 AW60 Toda AW60

TABLE 24. GENEALOGY OF MELGARSH (TARDHARSH) MODOL: DESCENDANTS OF GT. GT. GT. GRANDFATHERS FROM ANOTHER MARRIAGE.

Conventional signs as in Tables 21 and 22.

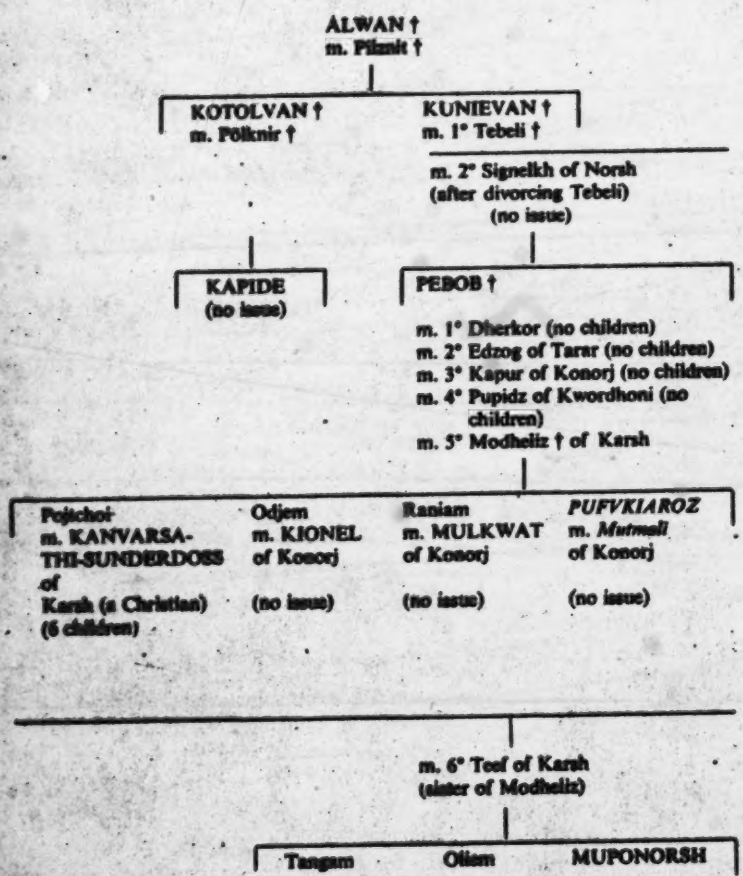
601
621
614

[facing p. 278]

13: Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW60 Toda AW60

TABLE 25. GENEALOGY OF MELGARSH (TARDHARSH) MODOL: DESCENDANTS OF THE GT. GT. GT. GRANDFATHER ALWAN.

601
621
614



Conventional signs as in Tables 21 and 22.

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[Melgarsh Village]

159 621 mainly sitting in the sun or, when it rains during the monsoon, in the house in which she lives. She is remarkable for a protruding front tooth; the children do not go near her, and she occasionally receives visitors of her own age from other *mads*.

[614] [754] (2) KARNOZ: Aged sixty, he is the chief of the Melgarsh clan. A sly, nasty old man, he is reputed, as I have said, to be a *pili* (sorcerer) and is universally disliked and feared, even by his own brothers. I have already told the tale of how he became head of his *modol* by ruthlessly eliminating Ujar and his family (see p. 266).

(3) Kupidz: She is a white-haired widow who, after the deaths of her husbands and children, has returned to live out her remaining years with her brothers and their family. She is a most charming person, always with a smile on her face, partaking of the life of the *mad*, doing odd jobs here and there to help, and is a great favourite of the children, whom she loves. She is an inveterate beggar, and is always coming to me for clothes, spectacles (for her bad eyes), medicine and *bakshish*; but she is so jolly and nice about it that I find it very difficult to say no to her.

[135] [123]

(4) PADS: Two years younger than Karnoz, his elder brother, he is of a shy and mild disposition. He is a gardener in the Ootacamund Botanical Gardens which occupation is somewhat of a departure from Toda tradition. He, nevertheless, does not give up his pastoral duties, and takes an active part in tending the buffaloes with the others, outside his working hours. For his work in the Botanical Gardens, he will dress in non-Toda clothes, but every evening on coming back to the *mad* he dons the tribal *putkili* without which he would not dream of carrying out his Toda obligations. He is now the head of the family, Karnoz having taken a new young wife, and it is obvious that Silidz and the children look upon him with affection, if not perhaps with much consideration.

[464] [291]

(5) Silidz: She is a hard-working housewife, worn and withered prematurely by too much devotion to her domestic duties. She is fifty-five, but appears older. She is always busy about the house, cooking meals, fetching water, stitching the clothes of the others, even feeding the pariah dogs on left-over scraps of food. It was with the greatest difficulty that I was able to interrogate her, as she always pleaded that she had no time to spare for me. She is, however, of a charming disposition, never complaining and always willing to do anything which is asked of her, even by the small children who quite scandalously take advantage of her good nature.

[124]

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(6) Nalsirwurf: The young wife of Karnoz, whom he took in 1945, thus putting an end to the polyandrous arrangement with Pads. She is twenty-five years old – thirty-five years younger than her husband. She is a beautiful woman, probably the handsomest of the whole tribe, and knowns it. She assumes languorous, indolent airs, which give her a certain amount of added attraction, as it suits her dusky, classical features, and figure, but I was unable to make out if this behaviour was due to a deliberately studied poise or if it was the result of her life with Karnoz which, as was to be expected, is not a happy one; the old man is far too domineering and matter of fact with her, while obviously very proud that he has taken her to wife. 159 621

(7) MUTNARSH: An ugly, hard-working, intelligent and willful man, the real head of the whole family for which he selflessly works very hard. He is devoted to his wife and children and would do anything to assist them. When I first met Mutnarsh (after the birth of the two last twins) he struck me as being unreliable and unpleasant; but after I had got used to him, I came to appreciate his outstanding qualities as a husband and father, and developed considerable respect for him. He too is a gardener in the Botanical Gardens. [464]

(8) KUDDHUE: A cripple, aged twenty-five, ten years younger than Mutnarsh. He cannot walk upright, the broken joints of his knees keeping him from extending these, and obliging him to walk with them constantly bent. The story which his family tells is that, as a child, he was sitting on the wall of the buffalo pen, when Kali (the Indian goddess of destruction) in the form of wind threw him down and broke both his legs. He is extremely ugly, with a wild look in his eyes, but on the other hand, he is exceptionally good-natured and happy, and is very attached to the children who do not, however, return his affection. He is nearly always employed as a priest, if not in the *tarvali* of the Melgarsh *mad*, in the tribe's *wursulis* for which he is very much sought after. [732] [793]

(9) MUNBOKWUTN: The youngest brother of the trio, aged nineteen. When I was in the Nilgiris ten years earlier, he was only nine, but already a polyandrous husband of the brothers' common wife, Erzigwuf. He is still only an overgrown boy, very athletic and strong, a great favourite of the children with whom he behaves more as a big brother than as a father. He takes an active part in the tending of the buffaloes, and is never far from the *mad* where he apparently likes to stay. [595]

(10) Erzigwuf: The embodiment of motherhood, aged thirty, she is one of the few fertile women of the tribe (there were one hundred Toda women who were sterile at the time of my stay in 1949). As she is so [842]

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159 central a figure in this family, her story should be, I think, a bit elabo-
621 rated. She was born a member of the Pan clan of the Tardharsh moiety, the daughter of a woman called Monkiz of the Kiaror *modol* and officially of Tinmarsh, and a man of Pan. I say "officially" because actually Monkiz already had a husband, Urshen of Melgarsh, by whom she was
[587] expecting. But, as is very usual with the Todas, she was carried off by Tinmarsh when he heard that she was with child and, after due compensation had been paid to Urshen, he gave her the bow and arrow in the *putsütpimi* ceremony. Monkiz died soon after, and the newborn
[846] Erzigwuf was more or less abandoned, her father going off with another woman who did not care for her at all. She would have died had it not been for Terzivel, her paternal grandmother, who took her to the *mad* Natersh and looked after her. At a very early age, as is the Toda cus-
[587] tom, she was married to her *matchuni* (cross-cousin), Kishkil of Kiaror. When she came of age, she was married to Alvurvishk of Karsh, who paid six buffaloes to Kishkil in compensation for taking her away. She had no children by this husband, who actually died soon after the wedding. He was succeeded by Mutnarsh of Melgarsh and his brothers, her
159 present husbands. She at first had four still-born children, for which
621 the family roundly abused her; she was very depressed by this and wanted to commit suicide, but could never actually bring herself to do it.
845 Then she went to Palani in the plains (a Tamil temple famous for its
[762] pilgrimages) and made a vow to the deity. Soon after, she was again
[842] expecting, and this time she gave birth to her first son, Pershrörsh. Then she had the other two children, and again went to Palani as, after Pengalam, six years passed without her having any more children. Mutnarsh went with her, and they both prayed in the temple, she for a boy and he for a girl, each without knowing about the other. The result was Sodup
[777] and Sodam, a pair of twins which the Todas consider very unlucky (in olden days one of them was immediately put to death). In this case, however, the *teuol* (Toda seer) when consulted told them that it was all right, because obviously their wish had been fulfilled after she and Mutnarsh had, in ignorance of each other, prayed for a child of different sex. They later returned again to Palini, and the twins which were born when I was at Melgarsh came, it was called, as a result of this last pilgrimage. How they were received will be narrated below. Erzigwuf had a lover, Kalorst of Pier, for some time (two years), as is the cus-
159 tom with Todas, but eventually Mutnarsh quarrelled with him and he
621 left. She seems very happy in her present family life, and is always sur-
[837] rounded by her children who cling to her like chicks to a hen.

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[Melgarsh Village]

(11) PERSHRÖRSHWUTN, abbreviated to PERSHRÖRSH: The eldest boy of the family, and very conscious of it. He is quiet, self-confident and has a reputation of being "good with buffaloes", of which he is noticeably proud. He likes to go out to other munds, and to take the Melgarsh animals to graze in distant places, so that he is not very often at the *mad*. He always walks about with a stick, the symbol of his activities as a herdsman. 159 621 233

(12) NARJILKHWUTN, abbreviated to NARJILKH: Always busy about the house, where I usually found him cutting wood; he also looks after the calves, it being his special job to take them out in the morning and put them back in the pens in the evening. He is quiet and thoughtful and apparently specially friendly with Munbokwutn, his youngest father.

(13) Pengelam: A sweet little girl, with whom I was especially friendly. She is gay and playful, and is nearby always in the company of Narjilkh. She loves to muse to herself, to play imitating games, to sing and tell stories to the twins. She also likes to show off to people like myself, laughing and giggling when she plays at nursing her younger brother like a mother. She adores going for drives with me in the car, and cried her eyes out when I left the Nilgiris. 159 621 [123]

(14) SODUP: An extraordinary little boy for his age. He is exceptionally bright and intelligent and can speak fluently his own language. He is the spoilt darling of the whole family, often performing to a whole circle of grown-ups, who go into fits of laughter over the things he says. He is quite aggressive too, threatening his mother with disembowelment, and assuring everyone that he can manage the calves just as well as Narjilkh. He obviously derives much pleasure from taking advantage of the privileges Toda men enjoy, strutting with great satisfaction beyond the stone which marks the limit of where women may go in the direction of the dairy-temple, and where his twin sister must stop. [855]

(15) Sodam: She is as dull and backward as Sodup, her twin brother, is bright. I was unable to make out if this was congenital or due to different upbringing and the lower status of women among the Todas. She is very shy indeed and would hardly ever let me get close to her without starting to cry. She can hardly speak, and only very rarely opens her mouth, usually just sitting by her mother and staring with great round eyes at what goes on around her, and looking quickly away if any notice is taken of her.

(16) PETEROZN: Called after me (*Rozn* being Toda for Raja = Prince) who am his godfather, having taken that role at his name-giving ceremony. He is only a baby in arms, born two weeks after I arrived [123] [551]

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159 621 in the Nilgiris in 1949, and spends his time wrapped up in his mother's *putkuli*, where he happily sucks her breast to his heart's content.

(17) Unnamed girl: She, the twin of Peterozn, lived only twelve days.

(18) SINGARSH: A great, black-bearded Toda, he stalks about, long and lean, swathed in his *putkuli*, nearly always watching the family's buffaloes. He is silent and serious and appears to be very conservative. [276] He takes snuff and rately goes to the bazar, his usual sorties being reserved for the visiting of other *mads*. He is very fond of Sodup and often takes him out with him, wrapped up under his cloak, perched on his left forearm. He has been seen to laugh heartily at times – although this is rare – at the things that Sodup says.

(19) SINGUD: Also of the silent type, he is a good-looking man, clean-[464] shaven except for a short moustache. He is a forest guard of the Madras [291] Forestry Department, and is usually in uniform and away on duty from Melgarsh. When he does come home, he immediately dons the Toda *putkuli* and lends a hand with bringing in the buffaloes or taking them out.

(20) Amoniwuf: The common wife of the two brothers above. She is always busy with the household, if not her own, then that of Silidz, [837] whom she helps a lot. She has a cicisbeo, a Teivilkh of Teir *mad* of the Kusharf *modol* who comes to see her regularly, he having been accepted by the husbands.

(21) MOTSOD: A very lazy man. He spends his days sleeping either in front of the house or on the grass before it. He is middle-aged, handsome, with a fine grey beard and light coloured eyes, but so apathetic that it is really surprising. He occasionally puts in a spell as a priest at the *mad*'s *tarvali*, but never for long. He also sometimes accompanies [293] the boys on grazing expeditions with the buffaloes (when they migrate to other more distant grazing grounds), but very quickly returns to loll about the precincts of the *mad*.

(22) Isam: His wife, a colourless woman, who keeps very much in the background and consorts principally with Odzel and Silidz.

(23) PILKHLIVOWUTN: A rather sheepish, shy young man, in his early [464] twenties, who is also a gardener in the Botanical Gardens. He is not often at the *mad*, as his duties appear to keep him very busy. He seems just as slow as his father, although slightly more active. He usually has a silly grin on his face; he is clean-shaven with a downy, budding moustache.

(24) KIRSHARSWUTN: A very young fellow, about the age of Pershrörsh, and is a great friend of the latter. The two of them delight in

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being with the buffaloes and are usually put in charge of the grazing of the herd. He too is reputed to be "good" with the animals. 159 621

(25) Närshmali: A lively and comely young woman, who keeps her household very tidy. She is always washing herself or doing her hair, in full view of everybody, which she seems to enjoy. She pours water over herself from a pot with her undergarment on, tightly tied under her armpits, it is true, but she very often lets it slip when drying herself, with exclamations of consternation, as if it were an accident. She is quite a flirt at Toda gatherings, and I have seen Pilkhlivowutn have to search for her in the bushes of a *shola* and drive her home again with a stick. Her second husband, Porshwutn, a mere boy, is never much at home. I was amused, however, to see him and his elder brother one day when Närshmali had actually really run away from them, complacently attending to the household chores themselves and, they said, just waiting for the *terershti* buffaloes that were their probable due to be paid to them. [832] [837]

(26) Pufvkiaroz: The only son of the notorious Toda Pebob who spent his time carrying off other men's wives, this man had an unhappy childhood. Both his mother and father died when he was very small, and there was nobody really left to look after him. It is said that surviving members of his father's family wanted to drown him as a useless mouth, and that he was saved from this premature death by Miss C. F. Ling of the Church of England's Zenana Mission. She brought him up to be a Christian, but when he came of age he is reported not to have accepted Christianity and to have returned to the Toda religion. He is a weak-chinned, thin man, with a resigned and apathetic look on his face, but recognized by the other Todas as knowing more than they because of his earlier association with the Christian Mission. For this reason, he has been appointed a member of the Collector's Toda Welfare Committee and he does everything that he can to assist his brethren. He also works as a gardener in the Botanical Gardens. [847] [797] [464]

(27) Mutmali: After Nalsirwuf, probably the second best-looking Toda girl. She is an inveterate flirt and has run away from her husband many times with other men. Somehow, however, she always returns after some days, without Pufvkiaroz exerting himself in any way. Last time I saw this happen, he simply carried on with the housekeeping himself, while assuring me that it would not be long before Mutmali came back. This proved to be true, and some five days later she was again at Melgarsh, sulking somewhat, and offering no excuse, but already having taken up the household chores again. [832] [837]

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[Melgarsh Village]

2. FAMILY LIFE AT MELGARSH

From the plan of the Melgarsh *mad* in Figure 18, it will be seen that there are three inhabited houses. These are numbered respectively from 1 to 3 and have the following names: No. 1, the *Warthuttiarsh*, or Bamboo House, i.e. the chief house, built with more bamboos than the others (in each Toda *mad* there is such a *Warthuttiarsh*); No. 2, the *Nortzarsh*, or Middle House; No. 3, the *Pudharsh*, or New House; these two last houses are also known as *Pardzilarsh* or Ordinary Houses, as opposed to the *Warthuttiarsh*.

In Figs. 19, 20, and 21 plans of each of these houses are given, with indications as to who sleeps in them and where.

Kuddhue, who was frequently *tarvalikartmokh* when I was at Melgarsh, slept together with Pershrörsh in the *tarvali* (not accounted for in the figures above, but visible in Fig. 18).

On the whole, the order in which people slept in the houses was surprising. Asked why, for instance Sodup slept with his grandfather and not with his parents as would have been expected, the Todas told me that it was "for his virile education". That Motsod and Izam slept on the floor when their sons slept on the *ertülkh* seemed to me equally astonishing, but I was made to understand that the latter were the coming generation and should be made as comfortable as possible with their common wife.

The finances of the Melgarsh family were equally unpredictable. Thus apart from the revenue in kind which the buffaloes brought in, and the capital invested in the houses and dairy-temples, the men received the following remunerations in cash from outside:

Pads: Rs. 46 a month as gardener in the Botanical Gardens, Ootacamund.

Mutnarsh: Rs. 36 as a gardener at the same place, and another Rs. 36 from the lease of the potato field which the government has imposed on the *mad*, lease which has gone to a Badaga cultivator.

Munbokwutn; Rs. 12 a week as a casual labourer with various Badagas.

Singud: Rs. 36 a month as a forest guard of the Madras Forestry Department.

Pilkhlivowutn: Rs. 36 as a gardener in the Botanical Gardens.

Porshwutn (Motsod's absentee son): Rs. 60 a year, clothes and food from a Badaga cultivator for whom he works and with whom he lives.

Pufvkiaroz: Rs. 35 a month as a gardener in the Botanical Gardens.

[text continues on p. 290]

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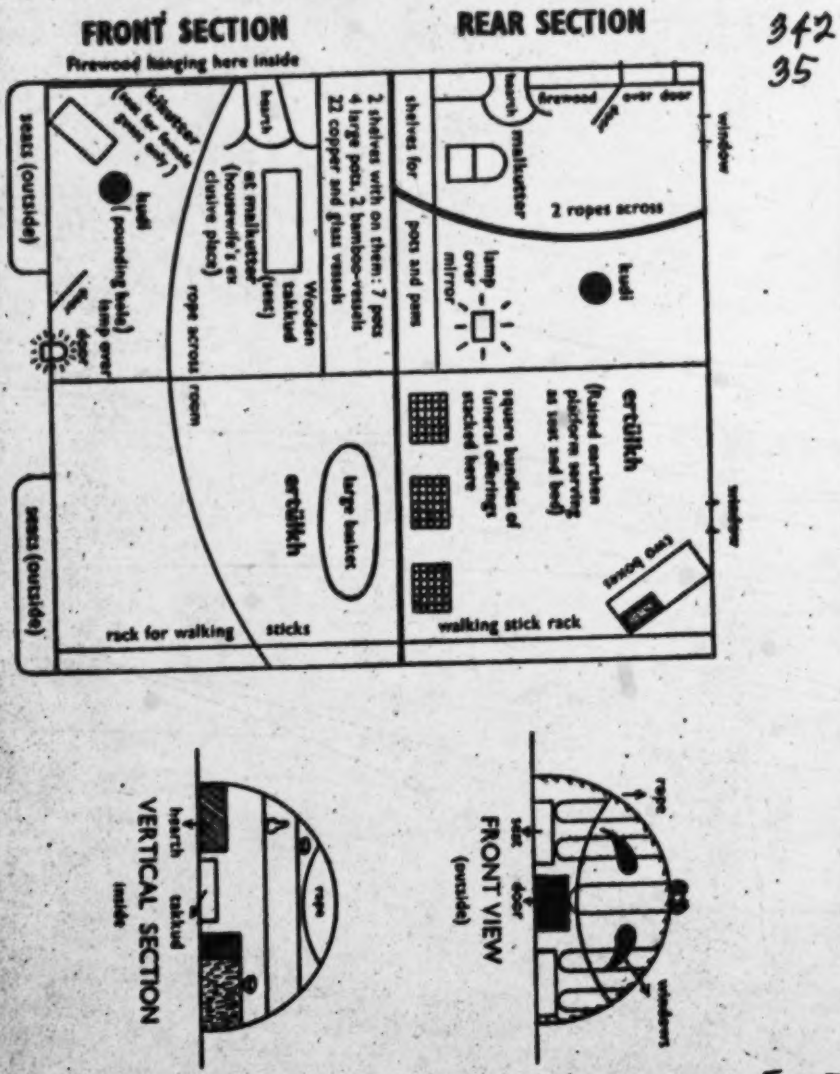

Fig. 19. House No. 1, the *Warthuttiarsh*.
Inhabitants of front part: Karnoe, Naisirwuf, Sodup and Odzsl; the last named sleeps on the floor, the other three on the *ertülikh*.
Inhabitants of the rear part: Singharsh, Amoniwuf, Singud and Mushekwute; the last named sleeps on the *ertülikh* with either of the brothers, while the other alternatively sleeps on the floor with the common wife.

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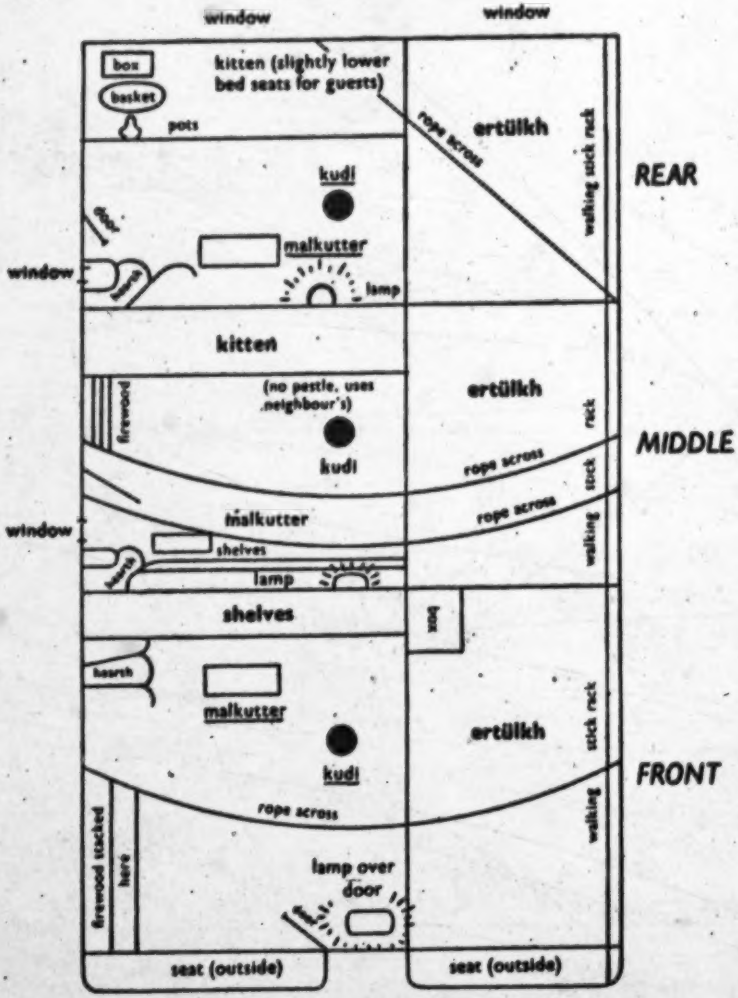

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Fig. 20. House No. 2, the *Nortzarsh*.

Inhabitants in the front part: Padz, Silidz, Narjilkh, and Pengelam; the two children sleep at the feet of their grandparents, who have their heads nearest the door; guests are accomodated on the *ertülkh*, while the inhabitants sleep on the floor.

Inhabitants in the middle part: Puvkiaros and Mutnali; they sleep together on the *ertülkh*; guests are accomodated on the *kitten*.

Inhabitants of the rear part: Mutnarsh, Erzigwuf, Kupidz and Sodam; the newborn twins were also put up here with their mother; the father sleeps with the little girl on the *kitten*, the two women sleep on the *ertülkh*, one at each end.

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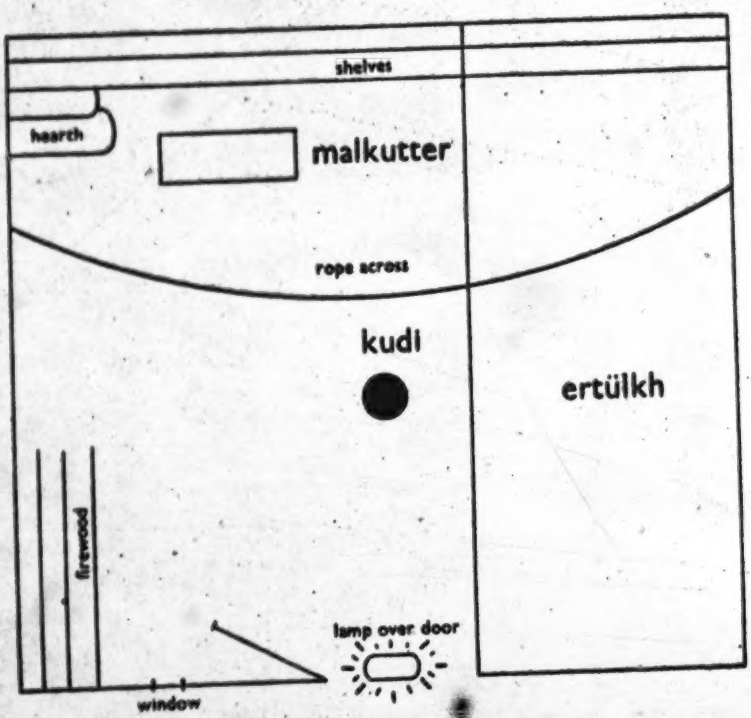

Fig. 21. House No. 3, the *Pudharsh*.

Inhabitants: Pilkhilvowutn, Nārshmali, Motsod, Izam and Kirsharswutn; the two first of these sleep on the *ertülkh*, the older couple on the floor, the younger boy sleeps on the *ertülkh* too, with his head towards the back of the arsh. Motsod is very often out, either as priest-dairyman, when he sleeps in the tarvali, or to see friends in other mads. Kirsharswutn often helps his father in the tarvali, when he also sleeps in the dairy-temple.

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511 621 With this money, each individual recipient kept the following members of the family:

Pads: Silidz, Kupidz, Narjilkh and Kuddhue, when the latter is not working elsewhere as a priest (in which case the *mad* where he is employed feeds and clothes him).

Mutnarsh: Erzigwuf, Pershrörsh, Pengelam, Sodup, Sodam, Peterozn, Karnoz and Nalsirwuf.

Munbokwutn: gives the money he earns to his father Pads.

Singud: Odzel, Singarsh and Amoniwuf.

Pilkhlivowutn: Motsod, Izam, Kirsharshwutn and Närshmali.

Pufvkiaroz: Mutmali only.

422 [23] The Melgarsh *mad* owned twenty-seven buffaloes and three baby calves when I was with them in 1949. These were distributed as follows:

17 ordinary (*putir*) buffaloes and one baby calf.

10 sacred (*postir* or *parshashir*) buffaloes and three baby calves.

These belonged to the following as set out below:

1. Singarsh and Singud (in common; this was also the case when they each had a wife and it is, therefore, not linked to their present polyandrous marriage): 6 buffaloes and 1 calf (2 *postir*, 2 *putir*, 2 grown *putir* calves and 1 small *putir* male (*er*) calf).

2. Purshwuö (absentee from Melgarsh, living at Karsh with his wife; his buffaloes are, however, at Melgarsh): 4 buffaloes (1 *postir*, 1 large *postir er* calf and 2 *putir*).

3. Pads: 14 buffaloes and 2 small calves (7 *putir*, 4 *putir* female (*ir*) calves, 1 *postir ir* calf, 2 *postir er* calves, 1 baby *postir er* calf).

4. Mutnarsh, Kuddhue and Munbokwutn (held in common): 3 buffaloes and one calf (3 *postir*, 1 baby *postir ir* calf).

425 Karnoz used to own eight buffaloes, but after two years of married life with Nalsirwuf, he decided to get rid of most of them in favour of the younger men. He thus kept only two (which are now at Kakhwurkh in the care of relative there) and gave the others as follows: three to his sons (the ones shown above, and held jointly by them), two to Singarsh and Singud, and the remaining one to his father-in-law, the father of Nalsirwuf.

425 428 In acting thus, Karnoz was actually forestalling the disposal of his property before his death, as is the practice with most Todas. Should a man die without doing this, his wealth goes jointly to his sons. Should he have no issue, it will be handed to his brothers or to the sons of the latter. Girls can never inherit; all they can hope to get is a dowry from their deceased parents' property, which the heirs should pay to them at [562] [583] the time of their wedding.

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the time of their wedding. In the unusual case of a man having no brothers and no nephews to whom the buffaloes devolve after his death, the herd will go to the *polm*.

I had put up a tent in this immediate vicinity of the Melgarsh *mad*, and was thus able, by staying in it up the twenty-four hours on certain occasions, to follow the everyday life of the family.

The habitual routine was really quite simple. The various members of Melgarsh would sleep in their respective houses as described above, and rise very early with the sun, which in southern India is already up at 4.30 a.m. Pads and Silidz would say their morning prayers (as all Todas do, see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 31), attend to the calls of nature in the bushes close by, and then prepare the morning food. There was very little washing, the clothes which were taken off at night (underclothes are worn then) being put on again. While Silidz was doing the cooking, Pads would go out and lend a hand with the buffaloes, which were taken out of the pen at this early hour and allowed to graze on the ground in front of the house. He was assisted in this by Munbokwutn, Pershrörsh, Narjilkh, Singarsh and sometimes Singud and Kuddhue. The latter, usually *tarvalikartmokh*, would then milk the buffaloes at 8 a.m. before they left with the boys, Munbokwutn and Singarsh, for higher grazing grounds, after the morning meal. Narjilkh would have let the calves out earlier and would have helped to retain them at Melgarsh away from their mothers. The gardeners (Pads, Mutnarsh, Pilkhlivowutn and Pufvkiaroz) once the meal was over would put on some dreadful rags, which were considered by them to be European clothes, and go off to their work in the Botanical Gardens. The women would stay at home and tidy up the houses, sweep them out, wash themselves (especially the younger ones), pound rice in the *kudi*, and cook the evening meal.

The meals are selected from the following foods: milk, buttermilk, butter, *ghee* (clarified *butter*), millet (an Indian cereal), rice, wheat flour in the form of unleavened bread or *gur*, (unrefined cane sugar), coffee, tea, chillis, bamboo shoots, fruits from the woods and honey. No meat is eaten, as Todas, like other Indians, are vegetarians. I obtained this list from Mutnarsh, and as he was very keen to give me all the information that he could, he even asked me, through the interpreter, if I wanted to see how he ate. He was willing, he said, to eat in front of me, then and there. I had some difficulty in dissuading him, and only succeeded by accepting to have rice with him another day, which I did. In caste-ridden India, this was rather exceptional, and I was glad to join

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Mutnarsh and his family in an excellent bowl of rice which had been prepared specially for me. We all ate with our fingers, with the right hand, as is the Indian custom.

In the afternoon, the gardeners would return from their work before 5 o'clock, while the women would sit about sewing and embroidering *putkulis*. The children would play, and those men who stayed behind, like Motsod for instance, would either sleep or receive visitors from other *munds*. After 5 p.m. the buffaloes were brought back; they would be milked again by the *tarvalikartmokh* and then put away in the pen, while Narjilkh would see to it that the calves were in for the night. Kuddhue would churn the milk in the dairy-temple, and the buttermilk and the butter would be brought out by his attendants to be handed over to the women at the precise spot (marked with an upright stone) beyond which they are not allowed. The evening meal would be eaten and everybody would go to bed early, practically immediately after sunset (7 p.m.).

When I worked only half a day with these people, I would usually stay with them from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. talking and watching what was going on. This seemed to be the best time in which to get information from the Todas.

3. THE POLYANDROUS UNIT

Approximately two weeks after I had arrived in the Nilgiris, on the 18th May, 1949, Erzigwuf gave birth to twins for the second time. It was about 8 p.m. when she felt unmistakable pains. She immediately got on to the *kitten* of the room she lived in and assuming a kneeling position, called for Silidz, her mother-in-law, who came at once to assist her. A first child, a boy, was born without difficulty, and, the pains continuing, half an hour later a little girl also made her appearance, who was taken out, like the first baby, from behind by Silidz. The latter cut the cords with a pair of scissors, tied the remaining stumps tightly with hair and smeared the wounds with an astringent root from the marshes which the Todas call *poli*; she next went away from the *arsh* and buried the cords and the afterbirth in a hole which she made in the ground. The new-born babies were washed in hot water and with soap (bought in the bazaar), and laid to rest with their mother, who had by now moved back to the *ertilkh* where she was resting on her back. She did not start to feed them before the next day.

When I saw her then, in the evening, she was sitting on the *kitten*, naked to the waist, suckling one of the babies from her left breast. She

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complained that she was not feeling too well, and that she really did not have enough milk for twins a second time. The babies appeared quite well, the one who was presented to me as the girl seeming better and stronger than the other. Mutnarsh arrived soon after; he told me too that twins again were an impossible burden for his wife and himself, that Erzigwuf could not possibly feed them both, and ended up by asking me for some brandy for the mother, to which request I did not accede, as it is the Toda practice to distribute brandy to others on the occasion of a birth, and I suspected that that was the real motive of the demand. Besides, prohibition exists in the State of Madras, and it is impossible to obtain brandy except for medical purposes, this even being tied up with considerable formalities. The complaints about the difficulty of feeding twins made me suspect at once that, in accordance with Toda practice, it was not proposed to let more than one of them live, and that preferably the girl would be left to die. However, during the next days, Erzigwuf looked much better (she went out for a walk round the house on the 20th, in the evening) and so did the children, and I began to lose my suspicions.

I enquired who was the father, and I was assured that it was Mutnarsh. Kuddhue, since the first lot of twins were born, was not allowed near Erzigwuf, she told me, as she had the dreadful impression that they might be the result of his infirmities. Munbokwutn had had only fleeting intercourse with her, and that after her return from Palani with Mutnarsh, and after she knew herself to be pregnant. The other children were not jealous of the new babies, I was told, and from personal observation I gathered that this was correct. Both Sodup and Sodam seemed to have as much a share of their mother as before, both having been weaned from her some months earlier.

On the 24th May, the birth ceremony described by Rivers (*The Todas*, p. 324) under the name of *polk potha nit utpimi* took place. Readers are referred to that author for details of the ritual, but it can roughly be said that it is one in which the recently delivered mother is escorted to a *puzharsh* or seclusion-hut where she will remain in impurity until a few days before the next full moon, (in Erzigwuf's case, she remained there for only three days, as the new moon was just about due).

The ceremony took place in accordance with the prescribed rules, and Erzigwuf was accompanied by Mutnarsh and Silidz. What was unusual, however, was that when the part in which water is drunk out of bamboo tubes was reached, Sodup who was standing with the rest of

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846 796 183 us spectators (Munbokwutn, the youngest father, was also there), started crying. He insisted that he be given some water to drink, which was done, although not strictly in accordance with custom. Sodam was also given a little, as she too started to cry when she saw her little brother getting what he wanted. But Sodup did not stop crying. He now complained that they were taking his mother away, and that he would be left without her. Sodam added her wails to his, and finally Erzigwuf took them both along with her into the *puzharsh*, which was quite unorthodox. So there did appear, all the same, to be a certain amount of jealousy in the hearts of the two elder twins. [865]

In the middle of the ceremony, Kuddhue turned up. He was, at the time, functioning as the *wursol* of the Karsh *mad*, and should strictly have remained on the job. He had even come to Melgarsh by the quickest way, i.e. along the main road, which made him unclean and unable to resume his work as a priest without the complicated ritual of purification. But he preferred to be *perol* ("ordinary man", that is, unclean), he said, than to miss the new-born twins, whom he had not yet seen. He brought some sweets for Sodup and Sodam, but the latter were already in the *puzharsh* and could therefore not be given them. [788] [793]

124 In order to obtain information concerning initial maternal care of children and the early development and education of the latter, I was obliged to question Erzigwuf and not rely only on my observations (which I would have preferred) as the time at my disposal did not allow for the longer method.

853 [862] Thus, in answer to my questions, she told me that she had breast-fed her children for the following lengths of time: Pershrörsh, one year and a half; Narjilkh, three years; Pengelam, two years; Sodup and Sodam, two and a half years. She had, she assured me, fed them this way even after she was pregnant, the last set of twins until the seventh month. [856] The fact that the babes had teethed when they were seven months old had not kept her from continuing breast feeding; they had certainly bitten her, but that was not much worse, she said, than their pulling and scratching her breasts with their hands. Sodup had been especially bad in this respect, tugging at her hair too, throwing stones and household articles at her and, after he was a year old and could walk, saying aggressive and sadistic things to her, such as his desire to disembowel her. They behaved thus when she did not suckle them quickly enough but also, she added, when suckling it seemed to add to their enjoyment. 862 The usual way to wean Toda children is to smear the nipples with the plant called *poll*, but it had not been necessary to do this with the twins

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as they had given up of their own accord when the taste of Erzigwuf's milk changed, due to her advanced pregnancy. 862

Somewhat incredulous of Erzigwuf's assertions as they were made to me, I questioned the local medical practitioner of Ootacamund, Colonel D'Souza, Indian Medical Service (rtd.) about their veracity. He assured me that it was quite possible. He said, even, that it did not tire the mother, as after some time "it becomes mechanical". Colonel D'Souza also assured me that the contention often heard that prolonged suckling prevents conception was a fallacy completely disproved by facts, "at least in Asia". Erzigwuf also told me that Sodup and Sodam were born after she had not had any menses for eight years; two days after, however, she contradicted herself and said this was not correct (she said she had made "a mistake"). But another time she assured me that Toda women cease having any sort of periods for four months after they have given birth; that is why, she said, they cannot have children earlier – she herself had been like this. Although I do not much believe in this assertion, which is contrary to every ordinary observation anywhere, I give it here for what it is worth. 853 841 842

Small children suck their thumbs very early, Erzigwuf asserted. As a proof, she showed me one of the new-born twins, fast asleep in her lap with its thumb in its mouth. For napkins, she used bits of cloth which she regularly changed and washed. She said that she taught her children to be clean after six months. Before that, she would take them out at regular intervals and hold them in her hands, both boy and girl. Then, after, she would teach them gradually to go out by themselves, punishing them by beating them on the buttocks with a stinging nettle (called *tworkh* in Toda) when they misbehaved in the house, and rewarding them with sweets when they were good and did as they were told. They learned very quickly, in approximately one month. 854 863 [861] [824]

Regarding genital development, Erzigwuf was very outspoken, and I had no difficulty in getting information from her, even in the presence of Narjilkh and Pengelam, who would listen with interest to the conversation through Kanvarsathi-Sunderdoss, my interpreter. She said that masturbation started very early – at about nine months. They play with their genitals, both boys and girls, but the former more so, all the time; when walking, suckling and lying down, as she put it. When they get older, this play is intensified, and after they have reached the age of one year, she intervenes to stop it. She did so, she said, and not Mutnarsh who "lets the children do anything they want". Asked why she did not allow them to carry on freely, she said, because if she did not forbid 864

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864 them to do this they would a) continue when adult, b) spoil their health by doing so. The method for overcoming the "evil" is to administer [861] *tworkh* on the genitals, as on the buttocks for insanitary lapses. (Inci- [824] dentally Ersigwuf admitted that she also made use of these nettles on the mouths of her children when they bit her, and on their fingers, when they pinched her and pulled her hair.) Masturbation, as a result, is less intensive, but does, all the same, continue, she said, until the fourth year. Then there is a period of calm (latency?) until the twelfth year.

My interpreter here put in his own version. He said that Erzigwuf was not telling the truth, and that he had observed other things with his own children. They carried on with masturbation until the ninth year inclusive, and what was apparently latency, thus lasted for only three years. He also mentioned that in his day the punishments employed [861] were much more drastic. A horrible one that he remembers consisted of having the wrists tied behind the back, the cloak fastened tightly over arms and legs and to be put, thus trussed up, at the entrance to the buffalo pen when the animals rushed out either in the morning or in [828] the evening. It was here that Kanvarsathi told me that Pangur, the adult [839] son of the Tervilkh chieftain Piliar of Kuur *mad*, had never really given up masturbating because, in his opinion, he had been too repressed in his activity as a child and had thus never grown out of the habit.

836 Premarital relations between young people after puberty are not discouraged with the Todas, provided they take place within the permissibe marital rules of the tribe, i.e. outside the *polkhliol* and *modol*, but [835] within the moiety. Thus, premarital relations with a *matchuni* are considered quite normal, and should a child result from them, there is no harm done, as, officially, they are not premarital realations at all, but those of a wedded couple, even if the marriage took place in very early childhood.

I asked Erzigwuf if Pershrörsh, the eldest boy, who had attained the age of puberty, had any relations with girls, and her answer was that he probably had, as he was most of the time away from Melgarsh and she could not get him to stay, although she had asked him to, since Mutnarsh was very busy in the Botanical Gardens. Narjilkh, she said, was too young for such things, and Pengelam also, although the latter, a girl, would be watched more as she grew older.

845 Three days after the family had entered the *puzharsh*, I went to see 123 them come out and return to the *mad*. I noticed that of the two newborn twins, the boy looked very sick, while the girl was strong and healthy. In order to keep the little one alive, and because Erzigwuf was

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still complaining that she had insufficient milk for both, I went to the bazaar and bought he a tin of Glaxo and a bottle of Gripe-ease. On the 30th May, there was a definite change. The boy started looking better, while the girl's health began to decline. Motsod had been to my bungalow early in the morning to ask me to come, as the little girl twin, he said, was unwell. She certainly looked listless and weak, and I wondered how this could have come about so quickly. I suspected that she was not being fed properly, and I imagined it was because the Todas had, all the same, decided to let her die, in accordance with their ancient custom of female infanticide, and of doing away with one of a pair of twins.

I went to the local government hospital, and requested the assistance of the Indian practitioner in charge, but he refused to come along, giving as an excuse that he could not possibly create a precedent by attending aboriginals at their homes. I tried to persuade Erzigwuf to travel to the hospital in my car, but she refused, saying that she was not well enough, and that the baby, besides, was too sick to stand the trip. Karnos put a word in too, stating that Western medicine was no good in a case like this, and that it was better for the child to remain at the *mad*. There was much wailing and crying over the bad health of the child, however, and to anybody unacquainted with Toda customs, this behaviour would have appeared perfectly genuine.

On the morning of the 31st, Munbokwutn turned up at my bungalow at 7.30 a.m. with the news that the child had died. I went immediately to Melgarsh and found them all assembled in the front room of the *Warthutthiarsh* (where all clan members must be brought, even from outlying *mads*, to die), wailing and lamenting loudly over the death of the baby. Toda visitors started arriving to take part in the mourning, and one of the first to crawl into the house on hands and knees, howling and sobbing ritually, was Erzigwuf's father, Tinmarsh of Pan *modol*. It all appeared perfectly real, and one nearly felt sorry for Mutnarsh, who was sitting outside the *arsh*, crying his eyes out, while Sodup, either from fright or in imitation, joined him heartily. Sodam, nearby, was quite indifferent as was also Munbokwutn, the youngest father. Only later, some four months afterwards did the Todas admit to my wife that they had let the little girl die, so that really all this exhibition of grief was purely conventional and, if not completely hypocritical, at least due to feelings of guilt or to the depressing effect which inexorable customs may have on people of this kind.

The funeral took place on June 1st, and as is the Toda custom, the little girl's dead body was first ceremoniously "wedded" to her *matchuni*,

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764 588 614 775 a boy of the Pan *modol*, which made her one of the clan for the after-world. She was consequently cremated at the Pan cremation ground, with a further display of grief and lamentation.

ADDENDUM

Observation of the children's behaviour

123 While having necessarily to question the Todas at times, principally in order to obtain explanations of things which could not simply be observed, but also in order to get as many results as possible within the few months that I was in the Nilgiris, I managed, all the same, to do quite a lot of pure observation of their everyday behaviour, without disturbing them too much, I think, by my alien presence. The very fact, however, that I was there, upset the family pattern of usual activities. This is a problem which I am sure other anthropologists have had to contend with, but for which I, for my part at least, found no really satisfactory solution. Thus, for instance, 123 the Melgarsh people, the Melgarol, very quickly discovered that I was interested in the children. They consequently would play them up for me 855 as much as they could as soon as I arrived. Sodup, who was really an ex-159 ceptionally amusing and bright child, was specially singled out for this, and greatly encouraged to be "funny" in my presence. I believe, nevertheless, that he would have been the darling of Melgarsh anyhow, as many of his pranks, as far as I was concerned, were his own genuine invention and were definitely not suggested by those around him.

159 Some of the things he said and did were quite remarkable and of con-857 siderable psychological interest. Thus one day (May 2nd, 1949), he started off to tell how his father (Mutnarsh) was wonderfully skilled in the art of catching buffaloes by the horns (as is the practice at Toda funerals: see Rivers, *The Todas*, p. 349). His mouth puckered up; his eyes flashing, and waving a small cane in his hand, he went on to show how he, Sodup, treated the calf which had been entrusted to his care. He said it drank too much milk and that he had to beat it to stop from doing so. Switching to another subject, he told us how a rat had made a hole in the house in which he lived, and how he had watched it go through that hole. He came back to the calf theme very soon after and began illustrating the way he beat the calf by running after the girls present: Pengelam, Mutmali and Närahmali. Pretending to be very frightened, they ran away from him with laughter and cries, which were intended, of course, to encourage him even more. Sodam, his twin sister, looked on from her mother's side, with great round, frightened eyes.

After the funeral of his ill-fated little sister, Sodup indulged in the following antics. He began by telling us that the surviving baby cried too much, and that it had better beware, as the other one had been taken away dead, by the scruff of the neck (?) to a funeral. Changing the subject abruptly, he said that his uncle Singarsh was too often in the bazaar and

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not enough at home; he threatened to tie him to the house so that he be compelled to look more after the buffaloes. With gestures and cries, still wagging a stick in his hand, he showed how he would lead the buffaloes at the next summer migration to greener pastures. When an Indian visitor turned up to have a look at the Todas, he exclaimed that he was tired of visitors, and that they should not be allowed near the *mad* (the Indian looked at me for some time, and then, intrigued, asked: "What is this work?" which may or may not have provoked Sodup's remark). He pointed to my bungalow on the opposite hill, and said he wanted to go there. Then he picked up a bit of discarded tinfoil and ran about, throwing it into the air.

A few days later I found him in the same boisterous mood. He started pulling at the clothes of Singarsh and beating his legs, and when tired of his victim, had the effrontery to do the same to Karnos, which was quite unusual. Nobody really minded, however, and there was much laughter. He then set upon Kupidz, his grandmother, pulled her hair and bit her, and even tried to undress her. He endeavoured to throw stones at the on-looking women, but stopped short at that. He picked up the empty Glaxo tin, and loudly proclaimed that it was he who had bought it for the new baby in the bazaar.

One of the most difficult things to collect from the Todas was dreams. They somehow sensed that there was something intimate about these and would not disclose them, although they were quite willing to speak openly and publicly about sexual matters. During the whole time I was in the Nilgiris in 1949, I was only able to get Motsod to give me one of his dreams, an insignificant one; and to obtain another one from Sodup. This was to the effect that he dreamed that a big bear had taken his mother away, and that it had mauled her badly, so that she was bleeding profusely from the left shoulder (Erzigwuf fed her children mainly from the left breast, because it was "more convenient", she said). He saw the bear carry his mother past the Warthuttiarsh, on the left side. He said that he was not sorry at all. (I noted that when Sodup was "naughty", Erzigwuf threatened him by saying that he would be carried off by a bear.)

One other day (August 14th, 1949). Sodup astounded me during an afternoon session by suddenly exclaiming to me in English: "Hey! you bugger!" Asked where on earth he had learned this, Kanvarsathi said it was from British soldiers on leave from Madras, but considering that we were then in 1949, that the British left India in 1947, and that Sodup was only two and a half years old, either he had a remarkably retentive memory, or Kanvarsathi's explanation was not correct. Anyhow, Sodup seemed perfectly aware that this was a rude expression, not meant to please me.

The contrast between the twins was extremely marked. Sodam hardly ever left her mother, and preferred to stay indoors. Erzigwuf told me that she had been difficult in this way ever since it had been necessary to use force to vaccinate her some time ago. When scolded she would sulk for hours, while Sodup, who had made no difficulty about being vaccinated, "forgets at once". It was obvious that exteriorized aggression was a very marked component of the little boy's character. In a film which I made

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159 of the family, he can be seen threatening his father, Mutnarsh, with a
[126] gesture of his uplifted hand.

The other children were also quite different. They were older, of course, but their mother said that they had never been like Sodup. Pengelam
[854] would often take Peterozn from her mother and carry him around in her arms, singing delightedly to him in an enraptured voice. Once I saw her
[276] attempt to smoke the butt of a cigarette discarded by an Indian visitor, and Munbokwitn, in one of his rare displays of authority with the children, took it forcibly away from her, and said angry words to her about it (Todas do not usually smoke, but take snuff instead).

159 In the Rorschach tests which I took of Pengelam, she showed more
776 fantasy than any other Melgarsh inhabitant. Thus for Card V, she said the ink blot looked like a flying devil. She assured me that she had seen
[125] such a one when returning from the cinema three weeks before. It was sitting on a tree, and her mother told her it was a devil. Amoniwuf said so too. It looked like an eagle, and she was frightened, but Erzigwuf and Amoniwuf were not. What frightened her, she said, was the knowledge that the devil could throw a stone at her. A month ago, one such devil had thrown a stone at her as she was coming back from attending the small calves, and she had been hit on the foot. Another time, a similar devil threw a burning stick at her from a tree in the Botanical Gardens, near the Melgarsh *mad*. Her father, Mutnarsh, she said, also used to be frightened of devils many years ago, although he is no longer so. The devil usually smells at the feet to see if the person is afraid; if it detects fear in this way, it will deliver a blow, but should the person show no fright, then it will not harm him.

159 Narjilkh was a quiet, hard-working lad. He did not express much, and even when questioned answered only with reluctance. He was learning to
[868] cook, and to milk the buffaloes, as well as the ritual of the *Pol`hll*, as some day he will have to be *tarvalikartmokh, wursol* and even *kaltmokh* at the *ti-mad*. I usually found him cutting wood in the morning, logs that Mutnarsh had brought in from the forest before going off to his work in the Gardens. Narjilkh's most usual companion was his youngest father, Munbokwutn, for whom he seemed to have a kind of brotherly love. The two of them were always out together with the buffaloes and apparently got on particularly well.

As for Pershrörsh, I did not have much opportunity to watch him, as he was away most of the time. When he was at home, he struck me as being the favourite of his mother, a quiet, silent boy of undoubted ability as a herdsman. He seemed quite intelligent, and as reported earlier, be-
[836] cause he was suspected of already having a girl friend, looked upon with a certain amount of consideration by the rest of the family. It was while
[614] questioning Erzigwuf about him that I discovered about the maternal descent groups of the Todas, the *polkhliol*, as she was obviously shocked at my suggestion that Mutmali might be his girl friend. "No, no", she said emphatically, "that is impossible! They belong to the same *polkhliol*!" For he, through his mother, is a descendent of Monikidz of Kiaror (26) and she of Karner, also of Kiaror, although Erzigwuf herself is from the Pan *modol* as Mutmali is of Konor).

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Fig. 22. A typical Toda mad in the Nilgiris: Karsh, near Ootacamund.

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[793] Fig. 23. The *tarvali* of Melgarsh: Motsod, the *tarvalikartmokh* in his black *tuni* at the door.

[P 300-A]

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Fig. 24. Karnoz.

Fig. 25. Nalsirwuf.

[P 300-B]

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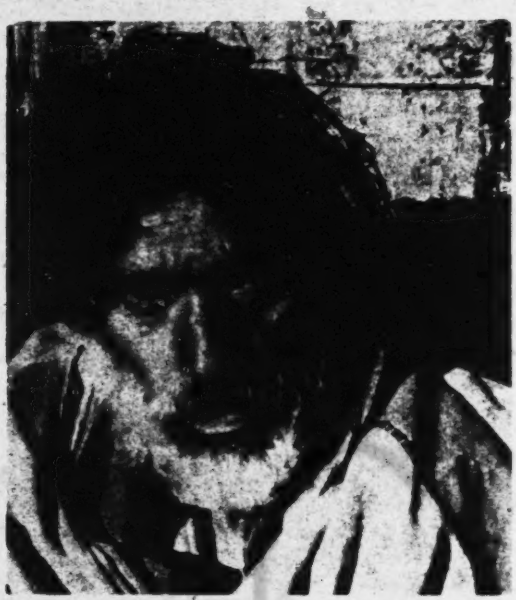

Fig. 26. Pads.

Fig. 27. Silidz.

[P300-C]

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Fig. 28. Erzigwuf with Peterozn, Mutnarsh and the twins, Sodup and Sodam.

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Fig. 29. Kuddhue.

[p 300-D]

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Fig. 30. Munbokwutn.

Fig. 31. Narjilkwutn.

[p. 300-E]

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Fig. 32. Pengelam.

Fig. 33. Mutmali, Nalsirwuf and Närshmali.

[P 300-F]

Types of cattle and associated dairy-temples and priest-dairymen

Cattle postir (sacred)	Dairy-temple (poikhthli)	Priest-dairyman
1) tiir (most sacred)	1) ti	1) palol and kaltmokh
2) kugvalir	2) kugvali	2) kugvalikartmokh
3) nodrovair	3) kurpali	3) kurpalikartmokh
4) wursulir (least sacred)	4) wursuli	4) wursol
putir (ordinary cattle)	tarvali	tarvalikartmokh

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Arsh - house
Ker - family
Mad (Mund) - hamlet or village
Matchuni - cross-cousin
Modol - patrilineal clan, patrilineage
Mun - maternal uncle
Noim - supreme council
Polkhliol - matrilineal descent group, matrilineage
Polm - a subdivision of the clan in which members are grouped for certain economic duties incumbent upon them
Putkuli - toga-like garment worn by both sexes
Shola - woods of short trees and bushes

[Information on Toda "clans" will also be found in category 614.]